



The time in between by MeetMeAtTheQuarry

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Summary: This is the sequel to We need her. It tells the stories of the characters growing up with not only normal people complications but of course, interdimensional problems along the lines of abilities and monsters. 2nd part of 3 part story, made for fun and angst haha

1. chapter 1

Hey guys!!! This is the sequel to *We need her* so if you haven't read that, you frickin should or you will be VERY confused!! Hello to all the readers who have read this since the beginning and hello to the new ones!! This part of the story is literally the in between of everything so it's mostly going to be happy, WHAT ME WRITING HAPPY STUFF!?? WHAT IS THIS?! No But I seriously hope you enjoy this!!

July 17th, 1986

For the most part, after everything that had happened, the strange group of outcasts went back to their normal lives. Or at least, as normal as they could be considering that they had two telekinetic teens and another who could shape shift into an inter dimensional monster.

They all went to school, played dungeons and dragons, went out and did normal teenage things. And for once in their lives they felt like everything was going perfectly. Sure, their lives had changed drastically.. but without those experinces and horror filled moments, their lives would've been completely different. Ordinary to be exact.

The days after saving the town, Mike's nights were filled with terrifying nightmares that only he could understand. He realized shortly after everyone came back safely that they didn't remember the monster killing them off one by one. They just knew that something had happened to all of them and to their dismay, they realized they couldn't help Mike since they didn't understand what he saw.

At the time Mike was 15 years old and after a long, horrifying strand of painful months, he felt hope. He and El had just closed the gate and he felt so incredibly relieved. Then the worst thing could've been imagined, happened. One of the strongest beings that the Upside Down had to offer appeared to Mike and pulled him and El outside with the others. He had dropped Mike in the middle of all his friends so he could watch that demon kill the people he loved, one by one. Every inch of hope, light, and everything that Mike was, died along

with his friends. Mike had been broken, and he was the only one who fully understood why.

After that, every night was filled with a different nightmare. Another reason for him to be terrified to close his eyes. His friends did everything they could to help him. They filled his days with joy and laughter, they stayed with him at night and stayed awake incase he woke up. Mike began to feel like a burden, he noticed how as time went on, his friends couldn't help but sleep during the day. He noticed the dark bags under their eyes when they were awake. He hated himself for a good period of time.

He yelled at his friends for constantly watching over him and not taking care of themselves. He cried while seeing the hurt on their faces. He broke down when they actually looked somewhat scared of him.

"YOU NEED TO GET AWAY FROM ME!" Mike screamed, falling to the floor sobbing, clutching his head close to the ground.

His friends stood in shock around him, the basement filled with his cries.

El was the first to act. She slowly went over to him and kneeled in front of him. She wiped the tears off her face and placed her hand on his shoulder.

"Mike." She said quietly.

Mike flinched, not bothering to look at her.

"Mike please... just look at me." She begged.

Mike shook his head, his body shaking.

Will came over and sat next to Mike, putting his arm around him.

"It's okay... we're here.." He whispered.

Lucas quickly followed Will, along with Dustin and Max. They crowded around Mike in the basement of the Wheeler household, at 2:53 am.

Mike let out a stifled sob and slowly looked up at his friends.

El gasped as she saw his face. Dark, heavy bags hung under his bloodshot eyes. Veins appeared on either side of his face, throbbing as he cried. El timidly lifted her hand up to his cheek. She wiped away a tear with her thumb.

She silently pulled him into a hug, knowing that despite what he said, he *needed* this. He needed them.

Will wrapped his arms around both of them, along with Lucas, Dustin and Max.

They sat there, silently letting out all of their pain from the past couple of weeks.

When they finally parted, tear stains could be found on all of their shirts and faces.

Mike let out a watery laugh of relief, "Look at us.." He said, wiping his eyes with the back of his hand.

El chuckled slightly, "What happened?"

"We... fought monsters.." Lucas said.

"I thought it would be cooler..." Dustin muttered, giving a small smile.

Mike laughed, something that hasn't been heard in a while. El smiled, along with Will.

"It's only cool in the movies." Max snickered.

Lucas nodded in agreement and soon, they were all talking and laughing. They talked until the sun rose and were found tangled up together on the floor at 12pm by Mrs.Wheeler, who silently smiled to herself.

They were finally being teenagers.

July 29th, 1986

Lucas always found it funny to boss around the group, since he was the first one to turn 16. Max would always call him out for it and say that he was only a week older than her.

He practically shit his pants when she turned 16 because damn could that girl scare him.

"I'm still taller!" Lucas had squeaked when Max approached him.

Max raised her eyebrows at him and then smirked, "But are you faster?" She said before chasing him through the yard.

Lucas' high pitched screams could be heard all through out the neighborhood.

"Go Max!!" El cheered as she laughed at them sprinting through the grass.

"That boy is in *deep* shit." Dustin said as Max tackled him.

Will grinned and then spit out his lemonade laughing as Lucas just layed their screaming out random apologies.

"Oh my God!! El, if I ever make you mad, give me a head start will you?" Mike asked while holding back laughter.

"Sure, and I love that you already know that Max and I are *very* similar." El said.

"*She* turned you against me!" Mike protested.

"And *you* are as scared as Lucas-Mc-Scaredy pants over there." El said, sipping her lemonade.

Mike muttered something under his breath.

"What was that?" El asked, raising her eyebrows.

Mike's face went white, "Nothing." He squeaked.

"He said prove it." Dustin said as he pretended to cough.

"Shi-" Mike yelled as he took of sprinting.

El yelled something at him before following him.

Will and Dustin were left laughing hysterically as the two toughest guys in their group were being attacked by their girlfriends.

"Wheeler!" El yelled as she jumped on Mike's back.

"I didn't say that!" Mike screeched as El pinned him to the ground.

Her face was pink as she failed at holding back her laughter.

"Ahha! El I'm sorry!" Mike laughed as he cupped the side of her face with his hand.

El just shook her head and leaned down and kissed him.

"You're an idiot." She shispered, playing with his hair.

"I know.." Mike mumbled, staring at her.

"A very.. hopeless idiot." El said, kissing him again.

Mike sat up and hugged El, burying his face in her shoulder.

"I love you." He said, his voice muffled by her t-shirt.

El smiled to herself, "I love you too."

Mike stood up, holding out his hand for El.

She took it and they walked back to their friends, grinning.

They came back to Will, Dustin, and Max laughing at Lucas, who was still apologizing to Max.

Once he caught sight of Mike he stopped, "Man, you have it easy. El just went all lovey on you!" He said, going red in the face.

El raised he eyebrows at him and then made him spill his cup of lemonade on his shirt.

"Ah, It's cold!" Lucas yelled with a high pitched voice.

Max laughed and kissed his cheek, "Come on dummy, let's go clean you up." She said as she pulled him into the house.

"Let's hope she goes all *lovey* on you, Lucas!" Dustin called after him.

Lucas flipped him off as the door shut.

El and Mike sat down on the steps of the porch, staring at the clouds.

"Hey Dustin, lets go get some more lemonade." Will said, grabbing the pitcher.

Dustin looked from Will to Mike and smirked, "Riighht.. Lemonade." He said.

"No but seriously... we need more lemonade." Will said.

Dustin looked at the empty pitcher, "Oh, right." He said, grabbing the cups and then following Will inside.

El intertwined her fingers with Mike's and continued looking at the sky.

"This is nice." She said.

Mike looked at her, "What?"

"This.. laughing and.. being.. kids. It's nice." She said, looking at him.

Mike smiled, "I guess we all kind of forgot what it was like for a while." He said.

"I'm glad we ended up this way.. All of us.. I think we deserve a happy life." She said.

Mike nodded, "A happy life." He repeated, staring back up at the clouds.

El kissed his cheek and then rested her head against his shoulder, closing her eyes.

And there they sat, listening to the wind, watching the clouds, and feeling completely happy for the first time in years.

MILEVEN IS MY OTP. Season 2 just gave me so many mileven feels and I can't wait to see future mileven moments.

I really hope you guys enjoyed this chapter and please stay tuned!

2. Chapter 2

Hey guys! So, I have a whole redemption thing planned for Troy and I might also have him date someone from the group... This is just my version of Troy because I feel like it'd be cool to see the good part of him. Just a heads up :)

August 2nd, 1986

Will often went to a quiet hill behind his house that he found one day when he was walking through the woods. It looked like something straight of a fairy tale. The hill had one, large tree on the top of it and the grass was scattered with flowers. He would go up there and draw. Drawing helped him with the mass amounts of anxiety he had gotten from being in the Upside Down. It was his safe place.

Will quietly sat down under the tree, leaning his back against the trunk. He pulled out his sketchbook and colored pencils and just let his mind flow. Most of his drawings portrayed something bad, turning into something beautiful because that's honestly all he wanted. For all the bad to be good and for everyone to be happy. He had been so close to death countless times and it gave him an entirely new perception of life and its worth.

He grinned to himself as his pencil went across the paper.

"Hey Byers."

Will jumped as he heard his name. His face went hot when he saw who it was.

Troy was walking up the hill, carrying a small cardboard box.

"What are you doing here?" Will asked, motioning for him to sit down under the tree.

Troy gladly accepted and handed Will the box.

"I wanted to give you this." He explained.

Will gave him a confused look and then opened the box. He gasped

as he saw a wide variety of paints, paper, crayons, brushes, and pencils.

"How did you..?" Will asked as he stared in awe at the colors.

"I've been saving up ever since I saw them. I knew that you liked drawing... and that you were really good.. so I got this.. as an apology." Troy said, searching for the right words.

Will stopped staring at the box and looked up at Troy, "You don't need to apologize... what you did was practically harmless and.. dumb. We all did stupid things and you were dealing with some hard stuff." Will said, setting the box off to the side.

Troy shrugged, "So were you... way worse shit than I was and you were *still* so.. nice.."

"That's because I had other people in my life who were helping me.. you didn't.. I understand why you did what you did and... I forgive you." Will said, placing his hand on Troy's shoulder.

Troy grinned to himself, looking down at his hands, "Thanks." He said quietly.

Will nodded, "You wanna see?" He asked, holding up his paper.

Troy looked at the drawing and his eyes widened in astonishment, "That.. that is amazing!" He exclaimed, "How did you do that???"

Will smiled, "All I need is a quiet place and then it just kind of happens. I don't even realise what I'm drawing until I'm done." Will said, staring at the paper. He then realised that the drawing was of his brother. He was holding the camera up to his eyes. The camera had vines and flowers growing around it that intertwined with Jonathan's fingers. You could see part of his smile through his hands. In the glare of the camera you could see a fairy-tale like sunset. It was like you could actually see the picture that he was taking.

Will grinned as he signed the picture.

"I swear you gotta gift dude." Troy commented, not able to look away from the drawing.

"Thanks.. You know, I actually used to be scared to show people my drawings because I thought they weren't good enough. I guess I just cared more about what they would think of them than what I thought of them. But now I know that that doesn't matter, as long as I'm proud of it." Will explained.

Troy nodded along, "That's good." He said.

After that, they aimlessly talked about random memories and facts about themselves until the sun started to go down.

"And that's why you should *never* trust a wasp, because no matter how you treat them, they will always be little bitches." Troy finished as he laughed.

"But *why* would you ever try to... to *raise* it?!" Will asked, holding his stomach as he laughed.

"I was 9! I thought I was this special, bug communicater!" Troy explained.

Will just shook his head.

He looked over at the setting sun and frowned, "I guess we should.. go." He said, putting his things back into his bag.

Troy frowned as well, "I guess.. I can walk back with you, since we have to go through the woods and I have to get back that way anyway." Troy offered, pulling out a flashlight from his backpack.

"That'd be nice. I hate being alone in the dark." Will said.

"Me too." Troy agreed as they began walking down the hill.

They made small talk as they trecked through the woods, Troy's flashlight leading the way.

Night had fallen quickly and clouds were beginning to cover the sky.

"We should hurry before it starts to rain." Troy said.

Will gulped, an eery feeling inching up his spine.

"Which way?" Troy asked.

Will pointed forward.

A crack of thunder made Will jump, causing him to inch closer to Troy.

"You okay?" Troy asked, understanding why he felt the way he did about the dark.

Will nodded, his face pale.

Troy felt a raindrop on his nose and silently cursed as more began to fall.

"My mom's going to *kill* me." Will muttered as they quickened their pace.

The rain began to turn into a torrential downpour, causing the ground to turn muddy as the boys ran through the forest.

Will tried to say something to Troy but the rain and thunder drowned out his voice.

Lighting flashed through the forest. Will slipped and fell in the mud as he saw a dark figure out of the corner of his eye.

He wildly looked around, expecting a monster to jump out, only to realise that it was just a dead tree.

He silently cursed himself as he attempted to get up. Terror shot through him as he realised that his foot was stuck under a large tree root. He clawed at the mud around it and tried to get up.

Will's breathing quickened when he saw Troy no where in sight.

"Troy!" Will called as he struggled to get his foot unstuck.

Once again, the rain drowned out his voice and he was left alone in the mud.

"TROY!" Will screamed, hot tears sparkling his eyes.

His heart quickened and he struggled to breath. Everytime lighting shot through the forest, he always saw glimpses of make believe monsters.

This was it.

He was going to die of fright, or get lost again or-

Will cried and screamed as he covered his head with his arms. His hands and feet went numb as he held himself in the mud and rain.

Will screamed as he felt a hand on his shoulder.

"Will! A-are you okay?! I couldn't find you- or see you and- I'm sorry I didnt- get here sooner- What happened?!" Troy asked frantically, holding onto Will's shoulders.

Will just gripped Troy's arms, his eyes darting around in fear. Troy noticed this and quickly pulled him into a hug. Will cried into his shoulder, relief making his body shake.

Troy held the back of Will's head with one hand as he hugged him, "It's okay.. I'm sorry.. it's okay." Troy said.

Will was still shakey when they pulled apart. He was only able to motion to his stuck foot as he was to scared to speak.

"Oh my god." Troy said as he worked on pulling Will's foot out. A sickly, wet sound came out along with Will's very muddy foot.

"Here-" Troy said, helping Will up.

Will's foot was aching from the cold and wetness, and his entire body was shaking.

Troy drapped Will's arm across his own shoulders and then put a supporting arm around Will's middle.

"Lets.. get you home." Troy said as he helped Will through the woods.

The rain finally subsided as the Byers house came into view.

Will let out a shaky breath as he saw his mom's car.

He stopped Troy from continuing up the drive way, "You should probably not.. walk me to the door. My mom is going to be mad enough as it is and I don't want her to get mad at you." Will said.

"You sure? I don't mind... I just.. Are you okay?" Troy asked.

Will stared at him in surprise. For the first time ever, Will saw concern in Troy's eyes.

"Y-yeah.. Yeah.. Thanks, for helping me back there." Will said.

Troy grinned, "That's what friends do, right?"

Will smiled, "Yeah, friends... I like being your friend Troy." Will confessed, a sentence he thought would never see the light of day.

"And I like being *your* friend, Byers." Troy said.

"See you around." Will said as he turned to go to his house.

Troy picked up his bike and looked after him, "See you around.." He said quietly, his face suddenly warm.

Trill? Trill. I'm making Trill a thing ;)

3. Chapter 3

Hey- Hi- Hello!! Jeeze I've been gone for a while and I apologise for making you guys wait and I will try to update more often! I've kinda been struggling with this story because it's literally the in between of the plot lines, which is nice because it shows the kids growing up and living their lives. Anyway, I've gotten some ideas with how to progress this story recently and I hope you guys stick around because the *We need her* trilogy is nowhere near done!

Hope you enjoy!!

November 15th, 1986

Scott delicately spread her paintbrush across the sign, the soft blue paint almost glowing in the sun light. Quiet music played from her headphones, her walkman clipped onto her jeans.

She pushed a stray piece of blonde hair back into the red bandana that was wrapped around her head like a headband.

Scott matched the strokes of the brush with the soft beats of her music and jumped slightly when she heard a car horn sound behind her.

Annoyed, she turned around, only to have her mood change immediately as she saw Jonathan getting out of the car.

Her face brightened as he waved at her, holding a bag of food from the Diner. She placed her headphones around her neck and slid down the ladder.

"Hello, lovely." Jonathan said as she bounded over to him, throwing her arms around his shoulders and placing a kiss on his lips.

"Hi." She said, playing with his hair.

Jonathan smirked, "You have paint on your cheek." He chuckled, wiping his thumb across her face, only to laugh harder as he made it worse.

Scott gasped at him and wiped her paint-covered fingers across his nose, leaving a bright blue streak.

She laughed at him and screamed as he picked her up and spun her around, yelling fake threats.

He placed her on the hood of the car, still laughing.

"We- we match now!" Scott gasped as she clutched her stomach.

Jonathan rolled his eyes, "To think that *this* is the thanks I get for bringing you lunch!" He said.

Scott's eyes widened as she remembered the food. She grabbed the brown bag and pulled out a hamburger.

"Ooohh this is the *best!*" She squealed, kissing him on the cheek.

"I know I am." Jonathan replied, he then tried to lean on the car in a cool way, only to slide off and fall onto the ground.

Scott laughed as he frantically got up, brushing off his jeans.

"You're so *not* the cool type." Scott said.

Jonathan just grinned and sat on the hood, taking out his own burger.

They sat in comfortable silence, eating their food and enjoying the peacefulness.

"It looks nice." Jonathan said after they finished.

"Hm?" Scott asked, putting her trash in the bag.

"The sign." He answered, gesturing towards the newly designed entrance.

"Ohh, yeah. The.. *storm..* Destroyed a lot of things, one of them being the entrance to Blue Bird. I re-did the windows, the sign *and* the front office. It was surprising that it reached all the way out here since it's practically on the edge of town, and surrounded by trees." Scott said,

her voice growing a little worried at the end.

Jonathan took notice and wrapped his arm around her, "Hey.. all of that is over with. It's gone and no matter what damage it did, we can fix it. And we'll have a good life without any monsters and..." He trailed off, his voice growing quiet.

Scott grabbed his hand, "I'd like that."

Jonathan smiled at her, "You know.. I was serious.. at the hospital, when I said I thought I loved you." He said.

Scott stared at him, her face giving off a faint, pink glow.

"Except.. now I *know* that I love you." Jonathan's face went hot as he realised that this was the first time he really expressed his feelings for someone.

Scott stared in shock at him for a moment, and then she smiled.

She leaned in and kissed him, her hand holding the back of his neck.

He wrapped his hand around her waist, cutting off the space in between them.

"I love you too." Scott said quietly, her voice soft.

Jonathan was filled with so much joy that he just started laughing. He lifted Scott up bridal style and spun her around again, learning that it always made her laugh.

Her laughter filled the air, making him feel like he was on top of the world.

Jonathan stopped spinning and pressed his forehead against hers, setting her down gently.

Scott kept smiling, her heart full.

"You still have paint on your face." Jonathan said.

Scott smirked, "So do you."

"We're not going to be *those* people that match are we?" Jonathan asked.

Scott shook her head, "God *no!* They annoy the crap out of me!"

Jonathan laughed, and Scott felt accomplished at the fact that she could make him laugh so easily.

Jonathan looked at her, "So.. *now* do we have time to think about us?" He asked.

Scott smiled, "We have all the time in the world, pretty boy."

She intertwined her fingers with his and layed her head on his shoulder, gladly taking in the sweet bliss of their happiness.

December 22, 1986

Mike jolted awake, the back of his neck covered in a cold sweat. He held his hand to his chest, feeling his racing heart. He didn't even know what woke him.. the only thing that he could remember were the screams.

Mike rubbed his eyes and then looked over at his clock. It read 3:57am.

Mike stifled a groan, he was wide awake now. Instead of trying to go back to sleep and return to having nightmares, he walked over to the bathroom to try and calm himself down. Mike felt oddly dizzy as he turned the light on. He walked over to the sink and splashed warm water on his face.

"Pull yourself together, Wheeler." Mike muttered as he looked at himself in the mirror.

His hair was a curly mess and his eyes had slight bags under them.

It's your birthday, try cheering up.

Mike treked back to his room, sitting cross legged on his bed.

He sat in the dark, trying to recollect the events of his dream. All he

could gather were scattered cries. He held his head, realising that these weren't dreams, but memories.

"It's been *months*... Get out of my head already." Mike muttered, bringing his legs to his chest.

He was sick of being terrified to close his eyes. He was tired of making up excuses about why he was falling asleep in class. He thought that the nightmares would've stopped, but they always creep back in. His last nightmare was weeks ago, so why were they returning now?

I'm 16.

Mike ran his hand through his hair. He was 16. He remembered reading something in one of the files that the age 16 would effect his powers some how.

Mike reached over for his supercom and called Scott, pushing the signal.

Static.

"Scott? It's Mike.. I need to talk to you.." Mike said quietly, his face growing hot.

"M-Mike?" Scott's tired voice came through the speakers, "Whadya doin?" She asked, stiffling a yawn.

"I... I had another nightmare and.. I think it's connected with the fact that I'm 16 today." Mike explained.

Scott was quiet for a moment, "I think I know what's happening.. can you meet me at bluebird in 20 minutes?"

"Yeah." Mike said as he grabbed his coat and shoes.

"See you then." Scott said, then Mike was left alone with the static.

He quickly crept down the staircase and out of the door, grabbing his bike and skidding down the iced drive way.

Mike was shivering as he pulled up into the Bluebird parking lot. He dropped his bike by the front and entered the building. He was met with a warm gust of air. Mike quickly ran down to Scott's lab, his hands starting to twitch.

He found Scott sitting by her computer, her hands flying over the keys.

"Hi." Mike said, catching his breath.

Scott quickly turned around and walked over to him, giving him a soft hug, "Happy Birthday.. sorry it's starting off badly." She said.

Mike shrugged, "Honestly, what else could I have expected."

Scott frowned, "I.. I just can't stand seeing you like this. *Nobody* should just be able to accept that bad things are going to happen, *especially* not you-"

"Scott." Mike stopped her, grabbing her arm gently, "It's okay... I know that we'll figure it out... somehow." He gave a small smile.

Scott nodded, biting her lip.

Mike jumped as he heard the door open. He let out a small sigh as he saw El and Joyce make their way down the staircase.

Mike didn't even have to say anything, El just immediately walked over to him and gave him a hug, resting her chin on his shoulder.

"You okay?" She asked quietly.

"Better now that you're here." Mike answered.

El smiled slightly, her big doe eyes shimmering.

"Okay.. Okay, Mike can you sit in that chair while I get everything ready?" Scott asked, signaling to the chair next to all the machines.

Mike nodded and sat down, El standing next to him, both of her hands clasped around his own.

Scott quietly connected wires on either side of Mike's head, turning on her monitor and taking out the syrum file.

"Okay.. so it *does* say that anyone who has abilities will reach it's extent at the age 16. Which basically means that any powers that you haven't revealed yet, will come to you...right now." Scott explained.

Mike bit his lip, "Am I going to be able to control them?" He asked, his voice wavering.

"Well.. not at first, but it only takes a couple hours to get used to them, and it's *usually* not the strongest of your abilities." She responded.

Mike felt a weight lift of his shoulders, "So.. what was the power you revealed?" He asked.

Scott grinned, "This." She then proceeded to hold out her hand, palm up. A small ball of light formed in the palm of her hand, sending light through her hand and forearm. She then closed her hand into a fist, taking all the light in the room with it.

"Wow.." Mike gasped.

El let out a small laugh as the light danced around the room, finding its way back to where it came from.

"Pretty." El said softly.

"It is isn't it? You see.. you don't have to be scared, Mike." Scott explained, "Not all powers are scary and dangerous, they can also be beautiful and kind."

Mike nodded, "Is there a way you can find out what my new ability is?" He asked.

Scott nodded, "I just need you to close your eyes and focus on your powers. Focus on all the things you can do and all the great things that you've done with them." She said as she faced her monitor.

Mike closed his eyes, feeling a reassuring squeeze from El.

He didn't exactly know *what* to focus on because it's not like his powers are an actual object. They're apart of him and you can't really point them out on him or find where they are. Instead of trying to pinpoint the strongest location of his powers, Mike decided to think about how he got them. He realised that it all began back in the hospital with Will, before he was taken away by the lab. Peter's gave him a warning, something that would soon turn into a threat. *That's* where all this shit began because Mike was too overwhelmed to do anything at that moment, like notify the *actual* doctors that something was wrong, or even the police. Maybe if he had just done that, things would be different now. Maybe he wouldn't have these abilities.. and he wouldn't be having constant nightmares. Maybe... maybe he would still be that scared kid that found a special girl in the woods back in 83.

No...

To be honest, he didn't know what would've happened if he brought attention to Peters back at the hospital... Maybe things would've turned out worse.

Stop thinking like that... just focus on your powers.

Mike screwed up his face as he recalled how he got his powers. His hands clenched tightly around the armrests and he could hear his heart beat increase through the monitor.

The red syrum and the lab continuously circled around his mind, making him break out into a cold sweat.

Powers. Powers. Powers.

His hands began to twitch, his heart rate increasing more. Mike felt El release his hand as they grew hotter and began to shake.

Upside Down. Monsters. Dark. Powers.

Monsters. Hell. Dark.

Upside Down.

MIKE!

Mike opened his eyes with a scream, falling out of the chair. He pushed himself away from the machines, his body shaking.

El ran over to him, grabbing his shoulder and hand.

"Wh-What happened, are you okay? Are you hurt?" El asked frantically, looking him over.

Mike shook his head, gripping El's hand like it was the only thing that was keeping him in control.

"Mike?" Scott asked, kneeling next to him, "What happened?" She asked quietly, rubbing his back.

Mike stared at her, and then at his free hand. It was red and blistered.

Mike took a deep breath, "I just.. I kept seeing flashes of the Upside Down.. a-and all these monsters, and the syrum.. I don't know, it was like I wasn't in control of my mind." He explained, flinching as those last words rolled off his tongue.

Scott bit her lip and then walked over to her computer.

Mike looked back at El.

She gave him a worried look, her eyes huge.

Mike frowned, he hated seeing her like this.. especially when it was because of *him*.

El nodded, knowing what he was feeling, "I hate seeing you like this too... come here." She pulled him into a hug.

Mike gratefully accepted, wrapping his arms around her and burying his face in her shoulder.

El silently pulled away and helped him up, leading him over to one of the swivel chairs.

Joyce stopped pacing and walked over to Scott, "Have.. have you found anything?" She asked quietly.

Scott chewed the inside of her cheek as she scanned the computer.

"Well.. I don't know what it will be *exactly* but his heart did seem to increase whenever the monsters flashed through his mind." Scott responded, looking at his brain waves.

Joyce bit at her thumb nail, "What does that mean?" She asked.

"Um. My best guess is that his new ability will be something to do with monsters." Scott caught Joyce's shocked face, "But not like how Will can transform into them or.. or how El can create them... It's kind of like.. if he thinks about it.. he can conjure up a new creature." Scott said.

Joyce nodded, "So.. how do we find out if he can do that?"

"We ask him to." Scott responded, walking over to Mike.

He looked up at her hopefully, "What did you find?" He asked, wringing his hands together.

"Well, I *think* that you can create.. small creatures. Like if you think about them while your hands are clasped together, you can create something." Scott explained.

Mike almost laughed out of relief, "So.. it's a.. good ability?"

Scott nodded, "Unless you *want* to create a dangerous thing. Anyway, whatever it is, it will follow you. Whether you want it to be like a pet or a servant, it will stand by you."

El squeezed Mike's arm, giving him a smile.

"So.. I just think about it?" Mike checked as he clasped his hands together.

Scott nodded, "Start off small." She cautioned.

Mike closed his eyes, holding his hands up close to his face.

He imagined something soft.. something kind and gentle.

Mike gasped and opened his eyes as he felt something appear in his hand.

He opened them slightly and peered inside of them. He found a small flower bud.

"What?" Mike questioned, opening his hands. He let out a small noise of shock.

As he opened his hands, the bud unfolded along with them. It folded open into a white flower, with large petals. The entire flower was the size of both his hands pressed together. Mike stared at it, noticing something rustling in the middle. He held the flower in one hand and gave the little furball a nudge. It made a squeak and rolled over.

Mike laughed, "It's a baby hedgehog!" He exclaimed, watching it stretch.

El giggled, "It's cute."

"Well.. I didn't realise that they would be *actual* animals.. but this is amazing." Joyce said, kneeling down next to El.

"Huh... I'm guessing that this wasn't the intent of this part of your powers but I personally love it." Scott said.

Mike nodded, staring at the little thing in shock, "This is *definitely* proof that there is a good side to these powers.. Now they're more than just... a weapon, I guess." Mike said softly.

He set the flower in his lap, holding his hand out for the hedgehog. It waddled over to his hand, sniffing it. It made a squeak of satisfaction and crawled into Mike's hand. It sniffed around some more and then curled up into a ball and fell asleep.

Mike laughed.

"We gotta show this to everyone else." He said.

"I bet I can already guess what Dustin is going to say." El said, staring at Mike and cracking a grin.

Later

"MENTAL!" Dustin exclaimed as he watched the small animal squirm around in El's hand.

"Ok.. Okay wait, this thing just came out of a *flower* that came out of your *hand*?" Lucas asked.

Mike laughed, "Yeah.. yeah, I know it's *really* weird but *look!* It's a frickin hedgehog!" He exclaimed, pointing at the animal that was now in Max's hands.

"Haven't you always wanted a hedgehog?" Nancy asked, peering at it.

Mike nodded.

"Is it safe? Does it have like any powers or something?" Hopper asked, sitting next to Joyce.

"We could take it to the vet.. but I think it's pretty normal." Mike said.

"Uh- yeah except for the fact that it came from your *hand*!" Lucas said, making a squeak as Max placed it in his hands.

"Did you create it or did you like.. pluck it from somewhere and then it appeared in the.. flower." Will said, reaching out to pet it.

"I honestly have no idea.. or *why* I can even do that." Mike answered.

Just then Scott ran in, holding a stack of papers.

"Okay! I figured out what *this* all is." She said, pushing her white glasses up into her hair like a headband.

Alright so Peters *did* intend for these powers to be used to create Upside Down like monsters, but he also wanted real animals because he wanted to use them like lab rats. Anyway, Mike did infact *create* this animal, and it is completely normal and harmless. Also, anything he creates doesn't need food or water, but you can still feed it, if you want." Scott explained.

"Cool." Dustin laughed as he was now holding the hedgehog.

"But what's the deal with the flower?" Lucas asked.

"Uh... it's there to help the creature compose itself and.. I guess it looks.. cool." Scott said.

"So.. I can keep it right?" Mike asked, turning to his mom.

Karen stared at it and then at her son and smiled, "Yes... yes of course you can. You deserve a pet *and* it is your birthday." She said, giving him a little hug.

Mike thanked her, turning back to his new pet.

"Like I said.. this is mental." Dustin said.

And then he had a happy bappy birthday ladada.

Ha! I bet you thought that this was going to turn into a super sad chapter but nO! No more entire sad chapters for the sequel.

And yes, Peters did use the flower because he wanted a fricking aesthetic while taking over the world, mk? I hope you enjoyed this chapter and Mike's new power will actually be useful, just wait. Next chapter is goin to be a heckin fast forward so whOop.

BYE!

4. Chapter 4

Hey guys! So I've decided that even though this is an in between of the two major plots, this story is still going to have a plot, and it's gonna be good, ok? And I'm trying to make it good so please keep reading and reviewing because it means a lot to me.

April 17, 1987

Will laughed as he stared at Troy's shocked face. He had just finished drawing a picture of his friend and was now revealing the awaited masterpiece.

"That's incredible!" Troy gasped as he stared in awe at the portrait.

Will smiled and felt his cheeks go warm.

He pushed his hair away from his forehead and then proceeded to lay down on the checkered blanket Troy had brought.

Will considered this to be a perfect day. There were fluffy clouds dotted across the blue sky and it wasn't too hot and there was a continuous soft breeze.

"Seriously dude, how the hell do you do this?" Troy asked as he placed the drawing in his folder. He now had quite a few folders filled with Will's drawings. The two had decided to meet every Sunday on the hill to talk and hang out. It helped both of them escape from the things they've experienced. It was their safe place.

Will shrugged, "I guess it's because I've been drawing for a long time... I mean I'm 16 and I can't remember a time where I didn't draw."

Troy seemed satisfied with that as he decided to lay down next to Will.

The two sat in comfortable silence, staring at the sky through the leaves. Every once in a while they would point out a cloud and say that it looked like the other person. They would laugh and both get a fuzzy feeling that they couldn't explain.

Will would steal glances at Troy, taking in every aspect of his face. He had brown eyes, curly hair, and a warming smile, considering how he used to act.

Troy caught Will staring and flushed, "What?" He asked, pushing himself up on his elbow.

Will copied his movement, not breaking eye contact, "I just.. I don't think I've never seen the real you until now."

Troy let out a soft laugh, "What do you mean?"

"Well... before.. I think we were both isolated. We were scared of showing our true selves and over these past couple of months I've definitely noticed how easy it is to talk to you now.. and just a second ago I saw *you*. You're kind, and shy.. even though you come across like outgoing.. You're a good person with a good heart and... I think that's really nice.." Will explained, his voice getting soft at the end.

Troy stared at him and suddenly felt an overpowering urge to kiss him. It might have been the sun hitting the features on his face just right, or the way his hair was pushed away so he could clearly see his eyes, or what he had just said about Troy, but he didn't care. All he knew was that he really cared about this boy, and he wanted to show him. So he leaned in and kissed him.

It was quick and soft, but it felt right.

Will blanched the moment Troy's lips pressed against his own. He had a shocked expression as Troy pulled away, which then caused Troy to go into full panic mode.

"Oh- Oh my gosh- I- I'm sorry- I should've asked or something-" Troy stuttered as he stood up and made to leave.

Will finally composed himself and stood up as well, "Wait!" He called after Troy.

He caught up to the boy and turned him around. Will took hold of his shirt collar with both hands and pulled him into a kiss. It was longer and more gentle than the first. It filled the two with such an amazing,

safe feeling that neither of them wanted to end.

Will pulled away but didn't release Troy's shirt.

Troy had a giddy look on his face and felt weak in the knees.

"I've been wanting to do that for a while.." Will confessed.

Troy smiled, "Me too."

Will then gave him one more soft kiss before grabbing his stuff and leading Troy back down the hill. Their fingers interlaced and their hearts full, they decided that they felt the same towards each other.

April 21, 1987

Will knocked softly on the door of the Wheeler's residence, hopping from foot to foot.

Mike opened the door and his face brightened as he saw his friend.

"Hey Will, what's up?" Mike asked as he welcomed him into his home.

"I.. I have to talk to you about something." Will said, nervousness rising in his voice.

Mike's face changed to concern, "Is it good or bad?" He asked as they walked to Mike's room.

"Well.. It's good for me.. but I don't know how *any* of you will think of it." Will responded.

Mike nodded, "If it makes you happy then I'm sure that I can accept it."

Will felt some weight lift off his chest, he was always glad at how understanding Mike was.

"Okay.. this is going to sound crazy but bear with me okay?"

Mike nodded from where he sat on his bed.

Will started pacing as the words flew out of his mouth, "Okay so you know how we helped Troy a couple of months ago and he apologized for being a jerk and stuff? Well then he came directly to me and apologized and then we started talking and stuff and I would like draw around him and we would hang out every Sunday on this hill that I found- It's kind of like our safe place- anyway I found out that he's actually an *insanely* nice person who has trouble with his feelings because no one ever taught him how to control them, and he's really great and supportive and I've really enjoyed getting to know him and we've become really great friends and Sunday we were on the hill and I have no idea what happened but I frickin kissed him." Will felt the hot jumble of words roll off his tongue before he even had time to process what he was thinking.

Will sucked in a breath as he watched Mike's face go through *many* different emotions.

It was a good five minutes before either of them spoke.

"Mike?" Will asked, his voice soft.

Mike looked at him.

"Are you mad?" Will whispered.

Mike's face relaxed as he sighed, "God no Will, I'm not mad. I'm definitely shocked but I'm *not* mad." He said as he placed his hands on Will's shoulders.

"Well... what do you think of all of this?" Will asked him.

Mike was quiet for a second, "I believe you.. about how you said that Troy has changed and that he's nice. I noticed it when we got him out of the library and I confirmed it when he apologized. And then when he asked you to go with him to get some punch at the snowball I realized that he's changed. And now I *know* that he has by what you've said and.. honestly if you're happy with your relationship with him.. then I am too. In fact, I want us all to talk about this and.. meet the real Troy." Mike answered, his voice steady.

"All of us?" Will asked.

Mike nodded, "The whole party."

Will smiled and let out a little cheer as he hugged Mike.

Mike laughed and hugged his friend back.

Memories of all the things that Troy did flashed through his head. The most vivid was the one at the quarry. He knew that it would take a very long time for him to forgive Troy for that but as of right now, he was going to let it slide.

Yes, Mike was going to ignore the fact that Troy had almost gotten him killed because he was more focused on his friend being happy than his personal grudges. That was just the type of person that Mike was.

Later

The whole party was gathered in Mike's basement, waiting for the news that they had all been promised. El sat quietly next to Mike, giving him a confused look.

Mike just gave her a small smile.

"Okay.. okay." Will said as he stood up from where he sat.

His friends ended their conversations as they focused their attention on their cleric.

"So... this is going to be hard to take in but I'm asking you all right now to not freak out or anything because this person makes me very happy and I want you all to get to know his *true* self." Will said to the group.

"Of course, man." Lucas said, as Max nodded in agreement.

"Definitely." Dustin said.

El gave him a reassuring look.

Will took in a deep breath and explained his relationship with Troy, doing a better job than when he exploded in Mike's room.

As he finished, Will felt his face go hot as he scanned the faces of his friends. They had the same reaction as Mike, which made him feel a little more relieved.

"Okay.. okay so you and.. *Troy*?" Max asked.

Will nodded.

"Damm that boy must've really changed if he became friends with such a nice kid like you." She said.

"He's.. *changed*.. I mean... wow." Dustin stuttered.

Lucas tapped his foot, "So.. now what?" He asked, turning to Will.

"Now.. I want you all to get to know the side of him that I know. You guys actually have a lot in common. He likes DD.. and Star Wars.. he's a nerd and he's nice and caring.. I know, I was surprised and hesitant at first too but.. he's different now, and you'll be able to see it." Will explained.

His friends nodded, looking satisfied with that answer.

"Is he here?" El asked as she noticed Will looking at the staircase every once in a while.

Will nodded and called for Troy. The basement door opened and Troy hesitantly made his way down the stairs.

He stood next to Will and looked over the party. He raised his hand and gave a small wave, "Hi." He said quietly.

"Hey." Mike said, waving back.

"Sup."

"Hi, man."

"Wow, he really does look different."

"*Dustin*."

Max hit Dustin's hat and then turned back to Troy.

Troy bit his lip as he awkwardly stood next to Will, "Um.. so look guys.. I'm really really *really* sorry for being a complete *ass* to you guys. I *never* should've treated you that way and I regret it everyday and none of you deserved that, especially after everything you've been through and I just hope that someday you'll be able to forgive me." Troy said quickly.

The party stared at him in silence for a minute.

"I forgive you." El said.

Troy smiled at her.

"Me too, I know that you were shit and you probably feel like shit because of it but, I forgive you. That doesn't mean that I won't make fun of you for it though." Dustin said, earning him another hit from Max because of that last statement.

Troy let out a small laugh, "I'd expect you to."

"You never really did anything to me so if Will can forgive you then so do I." Max said.

"Well shit, if my girlfriend forgives you then I guess I do to." Lucas said.

Max smirked at him.

Troy felt so relieved he almost fell to the ground.

He gulped as Mike stood up and walked towards him, "You'll have to earn your spot in the party but.. just know that you're welcome and if you ever hurt Will then I will personally come and cut off your dick." Mike stated, holding out his hand.

Troy let out a small gasp-laugh noise before shaking Mike's hand, "Thanks."

EyyYyy. Since this is officially an AU now, I can give Troy redemption okay? I enjoyed writing this chapter and we will definitely see more like this, so for now, stay hydrated and wonderful you beautiful people and I will post again soon-

hopefully before 2018 :)

5. Chapter 5

Hiiiiii! Happy New Year!! I hope you all are having a great start and I wish you all the best :) ALSO I just want to give a shout out to the wonderful Phieillydinyia because they are not only an AMAZING writer but their reviews always make me so frickin happy! I'm so happy that all of you are reading and I hope you keep reading :)

July 13, 1987

Mike and El were curled up together under El's den. Over the years, they've decided to keep it up since it held so many valuable memories. Their friends would often make fun of it but the two just laughed along because they knew that they were the only ones who truly understood that wonderful feeling. The feeling of being safe, warm, and incredibly happy all with the other under their fort, that only they appreciated.

Mike had his head against El's shoulder, passed out after a long morning shift at the supermarket.

El rested her cheek against his hair as she read her book. She was obsessed with fantasy and would always get lost in the magical worlds for hours. She discovered that reading quickly became one of her favorite things and she would often gush to Mike about the book after she had finished it. He always seemed so entranced in what she was saying and it always made her feel like the most wonderful person.

El placed her book in her lap and closed her eyes as she interlaced her fingers with Mike's. It was moments like these that she realised how far she had come from that scared girl they found in the woods during the storm. She had learned so much and met so many amazing people that she couldn't even believe that this was her life at times. It just seemed so... perfect. Even after everything they've been through, the constant nightmares and the pain.. it made them stronger and pushed them to get back the lives they deserved. And now, sitting in the old fort with Mike, El realised that they had gone beyond what they hoped for and created a wonderful world for them to be apart

of.

She smiled as she circled her thumb around Mike's knuckle. He stirred slightly and tightened his hold around her hand as he opened his eyes. He looked up at her, the side of his face red from leaning on her shoulder.

El chuckled as he revealed a sheepish grin.

"Hello." He mumbled as he let out a yawn.

"Hi there, sleepyhead." El responded, kissing his forehead.

Mike felt his face go hot and grinned wider. Even after all these years, he still got flustered around her.. she never ceased to amaze him and he doubted that she ever would.

Mike stared at her as he sat up. Her hair had grown out past her shoulders into loose, light curls. She had gained color in her cheeks and her big brown eyes seemed to glow.

"Wow.." Mike whispered.

El stared at him, "What?"

"I love you." Mike replied, his voice soft.

El let out a small laugh, "I love you too." She said as she leaned in and kissed him.

He reached up and cupped the side of her face, urging the moment to continue.

They slowly parted as El rested her head against his chest, her arms around him.

Mike smiled as he twirled her hair around his fingers.

"El?" He asked.

"Hm?" She replied.

"I think I want to marry you." He said, his voice quiet but sure.

El sat up and stared at him, a smile on her face, "Ask me when we're older." She replied before giving him another kiss.

Mike laughed and pulled her into a hug, that caused her to break out in laughter.

Her laugh was probably the best thing that Mike had ever heard, and it filled him with an undying joy that caused his heart to swell.

July 27, 1987

"Nonononooo No." Lucas protested as Max pulled him outside.

"You lost the bet, so now I get to teach you how to skateboard." She replied, placing her skateboard on his driveway.

"Yeah but.. I mean, did you really win?" Lucas asked.

Max glared at him, "Yes. Our bet was that if you couldn't scare Dustin during the maze yesterday, then I would teach you how to skateboard."

Lucas frowned, "But I *did* scare him."

Max laughed, "No, some guy jumped out of the bushes and *you* screamed like a little girl in Dustin's ear after he got scared by the same guy."

Lucas groaned as he accepted his defeat.

"Oh calm down you big baby." Max said as she handed him a helmet.

"What? I never see you wear a helmet.. hold on this is *Erica's*." Lucas objected as he held out the purple helmet that was covered in glitter.

Max shrugged, "Did I not mention that you had to wear that?" She asked in a mocking tone.

"I'm getting you back for this." Lucas said as he put on the helmet.

"Awww, it brings out your eyes." Max laughed.

"Shut up." Lucas muttered, a small grin appearing on his face.

"Okay, so it's not that hard, you just have to keep your balance and don't lean to far forward." Max instructed as Lucas got on the board.

He swung his arms out as it edged forward. Max grabbed onto his hands to steady him. Lucas felt his face go hot.

"I'm guessing that was not the right way to get on it." He muttered.

Max shook her head, "You didn't fall, so that's an achievement. Anyway, place your left foot in front of your right and now your going to push off with your right foot- don't do it to hard because you might fall." Max explained.

Lucas nodded and slowly pushed off of the ground. He moved forward a little before he started to loose his balance. Max grabbed his hand to steady him again.

Lucas stumbled off the board as it stopped, "How the heck do you do this?" He asked.

"Well it's not like I learned how to do it overnight. It takes a lot of practice and patience. You're going to mess up but trust me that you'll be able to go at least a couple of feet by the end of the day." Max responded.

Lucas sighed, "Okay.. okay."

Max helped him back up and took hold of his hand so he didn't loose his balance.

"Try again." She said.

7:12pm

After a couple of hours, Lucas stopped needing Max's constant support and eventually was able to make it to the end of the driveway.

Lucas cheered as he reached the curb and stepped off. He turned around and proudly did a spin in front of Max. She cheered with him.

"I told you that you could do it." She said as she kissed him.

Lucas smiled, "I had a pretty good teacher."

Max laughed, "This was fun, maybe someday you'll be able to actually leave the driveway.

A grin spread across Lucas' face, "Why not try now." He picked up the board and stationed it in the middle of the driveway.

"How about no, the street dips down and you're not ready for that." Max objected.

Lucas waved her off, "I'll be fine, I'll stop before I reach the decline.. it's just a couple more feet." He said as he got on the board.

"Lucas-" Max began as she walked towards him.

Lucas laughed as he pushed off and sped down the road.

"Lucas, you idiot!" Max yelled as she ran after him.

Lucas pushed off the ground again as he rolled down the road. He turned around and smiled at Max before speeding down the hill. He whipped his head around as the wind flew past his face. He bent his knees as he had watched Max do so many times and sped down the decline. Lucas gasped as headlights blinded his view of the road. He lost his balance and grabbed the board from under his feet as he dived into a ditch. The car honked as it drove past.

"Lucas!" Max yelled as she watched him fall off the road. She ran over and skidded down to where he fell. He was laying on his back, the helmet and skateboard next to him.

"Shit." Max gasped as she kneeled next to him.

She leaned over him and noticed that his eyes were closed. She cupped the side of his face, "Lucas?" She asked quietly.

Lucas' eyes snapped open and he screamed. Max screamed as well as she fell away from him. Her eyes went wide as his laughter erupted through the air.

"What.. the hell?" She gasped as she stared at him widely.

Lucas held his stomach as he laughed, "Oh god- your face was priceless!"

Max felt her face go hot, "You asshole!" She yelled as she grabbed her skateboard and stormed off.

"Max, wait!" Lucas called after her.

"Max!" Lucas exclaimed as he caught up to her, "Where are you going?" He asked.

Max didn't look at him, "Home." She responded.

"What- why?"

Max whipped around and stared at him, "Did you think that was funny? I thought you really hurt yourself but you were just trying to scare me?? Well it worked because I was genuinely terrified that I had caused you to get hurt!" She yelled, hot tears in her eyes.

Lucas stared at her in shock, guilt boiling up inside him, "Max.. I didn't-

"Just stop." Max snapped before turning around and walking off again.

"No-" Lucas said as he reached out and grabbed her shoulder to turn her around.

"Max, I'm sorry.. I didn't think about what I was doing and it was a bad idea.. I'm really sorry, I didn't mean to scare you like that. I realise that I could've actually gotten hurt and I *never* should have done that to you.." Lucas said, his voice cracking.

Max stared at him before dropping her skateboard and hugging him, burying her face in his shoulder.

Lucas stood in shock for a minute before hugging her back.

"I'm sorry I yelled." Max said, her voice muffled by his shirt.

"It's not your fault.. I shouldn't have scared you.." Lucas responded.

Max pulled away and looked at him, her eyes shining.

Lucas stared back, his heart pounding as he kissed her. It was long and full of sincerity and forgiveness.

They slowly pulled apart, holding onto the moment.

"Come on.." Max said as she interlaced his fingers with hers and leaned against him.

They walked back to his house together, both of them silently realising that they loved the other.

oOOo

Mileven and Lumax/Mucas :) I find it funny that Mike and Eleven's is all cute and then Finn was just like, I like mUcAs. Anyway, I realised that I hadn't given Max and Lucas much recognition so tadaaa.

6. Chapter 6

Hey everyone! Sorry for the wait, I've just been having really bad writers block and I've been busy but I promise that I won't give up on this story because I love it too much! So a sudden inspiration has struck and now I actually have a chapter idea that I hope you guys will enjoy!!!August 30th, 1987

It was the first day of school and all the teeangers in Hawkins could be heard complaining about how early they had to get up and *why, mom, why* is it so necessary to go to school for eight hours even when most of the information is useless and time consuming. The first day of school had always been a dreaded thing for Mike, and now it was *sophomore* year. Freshman year was... eventful.. he and the rest of his friends had to take summer school to get caught up since they were always.. occupied. Mike new for a fact that this year would welcome a new wave of bullies and utter annoyance. But.. maybe it would be different. Since he was now friends with his former bully and had literal powers.. maybe this year would be different. Maybe the bullies would finally mature and.. yeah no.

Mike scoffed at the thought. He realised that there was no point in worrying about bullies because they've never really done anything except take his lunch or push him in the halls.

Mike looked at himself in the bathroom mirror, giving himself a thumbs up as he looked over his red t-shirt and surprisingly curly hair. Yeah, curly. For some reason it had decided to go full on poodle on him. He didn't mind, El liked it so therefore it was okay.

Mike nodded in satisfaction as he exited the bathroom and went downstairs.

"Awww there's my little high schooler!" Mrs.Wheeler said as Mike entered the kitchen.

Mike rolled his eyes, "Isn't that what you're supposed to say when I'm in my *first* year of highschool?" He asked as he took the plate of eggos she handed him.

His mother shrugged, "Never got the opportunity to last yea- Ted for gods sake turn that off!" Karen responded, glaring at Mr.Wheeler.

He was fidgeting with the TV, causing it to give off a loud static noise. He huffed as he turned it off and sat down with the paper.

Karen turned back to her son, "Anyway.. I just want you to have a better year this time around. No more monsters or.. crazy people.. Just you and your friends facing highschool together." She gave him a smile with wide eyes.

Mike stared back, "Yeah.. I would rather fight inter dimensional monsters than go to school." He said as he placed his plate in sink and made way for the door.

Karen placed her hands on her hips, "*Michael*." She scoffed as he opened the door.

Mike waved at her, "Bye mom."

Karen waved back and sighed.

Mike picked up his bike and headed towards the school, his nerves starting to pick up.

"Wheeler!" Lucas called as he pedaled up next to his friend.

"Hey Lucas. Look, can you believe we still have to go to school after everything we've done?" Mike asked.

Lucas laughed, "Hell no. Everything's going to be so boring.." Then a grin spread across his face, "Well.. except for the school *dances*."

Mike's face went white, "Shit, we have to go to those??"

Lucas let out a pffff, "You saw how excited El was when she went to the Snowball.. now imagine what she's gonna do when she learns about Homecoming. She's in like every student club in the school- heck, she might even plan it." Lucas said as they neared the school.

Mike groaned, "I'm probably going to ask her in a dumb way... nothings gonna beat how I did it last time."

"Well duh. That was your guy's first, even if you *had* done it in a normal way, nothing still couldn't have beaten it. But don't worry, you have until May." Lucas said as he placed a hand on Mike's shoulder after they locked their bikes up.

"Hey ladies." Dustin said as he pulled up next to them, proudly showing off his x-men shirt.

"Woah dude, where did you get that?" Mike gasped.

Dustin grinned proudly, "My mom got it for me since I'm-" He flashed a smile and finger guns, "-the best son ever."

Lucas choked on a laugh as Mike chuckled and shook his head.

Dustin dropped his hands at his sides, "I am though." He whined.

"You're what?" Max asked as she wheeled up next to the boys.

"I'm the best son." He said defiantly.

"I think I have you beat at that." Will said as he pedaled up to the bike rack.

Dustin threw his hands in the air, "Oh come *on!* What's next, is El gonna come over and- what the fu-"

"*Dustin!*" El yelled as she bounded up to the group. She pushed his hat down, "We talked about this."

Dustin groaned, "Since when did you become the mom of the group?" He whined as he straightened his hat.

El stared back at him with her eyebrow arched and a smirk on her face, "Not of the group.. just to you, since I signed you up to join the student body club with me. No cursing allowed." She responded.

Dustin's mouth dropped, "Are you fu-"

"*Henderson!*" El yelled.

"-dging kidding me??" He corrected himself.

El laughed.

"She told you she was going to do it if you didn't stop dropping the f bomb all the time." Mike said as he slung an arm over El's shoulder.

"I'm a growing boy! I should be allowed to curse!" He retorted.

"Keep tryin buddy." Max said as she gave him a pat on the shoulder.

"We better get to class, my mom said she's taking away my comics if I'm late *once* this year. After what happened last year, it's like she's always watching." Lucas said as he took Max's hand and walked towards the building. Max grabbed Dustin's arm and pulled him along as she passed him.

Mike rolled his eyes and was about to go into the school when he noticed Will looking around.

"Will, you okay?" Mike asked.

He nodded, "I'm just looking for Troy... I'm honestly nervous about how he's going to act around me since we're... different, I guess." Will sighed.

Mike frowned and walked over to him, "Look, everybody's different and you don't need to be scared to show who you are.. if people don't like it then they can just look away. You're happy and that's all that matters."

Will smiled.

"And there's nothing to worry about- look." El said as she pointed behind Will.

Will turned around and let out a breath of relief as he saw Troy running towards him, panic etched across his face.

Will gave him a confused look and then let out a yell of surprise as Troy grabbed Will's hand and kept running towards the school, "I'm late I'm late- shit I'm *late!*" He was yelling. Will's laughter could be heard as the two ran into the building, hand in hand.

El took hold of Mike's hand, "They're good." She said.

Mike nodded, "They are." He agreed as they made their way into the school.

oOo

"El I don't wanna.. please don't make me.. I'll wash my mouth out with soap or paint your nails or something!!" Dustin pleaded as her and Mike made their way over to him at the end of the day.

"Nope. Not getting out of this you big baby." El responded.

She turned to Mike and gave him a kiss, "Wish me luck." She said as she turned to Dustin and steered him towards the meeting room, yelling about how she wasn't going to be his babysitter.

Mike grinned as her voice echoed down the halls. He stuffed his hands in his pockets and headed outside.

He met the others by a bench outside as the rest of the kids hastily made their way out of the building, complaining yet again about how terrible school is.

Mike found that his day wasn't all bad except for the fact that Mr. Wiggin is *nothing* like Mr. Clark. He's so shallow and mean and barely connects with his student while Mr. Clark is like that cool uncle that brings the kids toys everytime he sees them.

"Earth to Mike." Max was saying as Mike snapped back to reality.

"Oh.. sorry, what?" Mike asked.

"Lucas and I are going to the skate park, do you want to come?" She repeated.

Mike shook his head, "I have no idea how to skate board."

"Oh come on, Max is a *great* teacher." Lucas said as he threw an arm around his girlfriend.

Mike grinned, "Wouldn't you two like some alone time?"

Max's face brightened as Lucas' dropped in panic.

"Yes we would, in fact. Thanks, Mike." Max replied as she took Lucas' hand in her own.

Lucas blinked, "Yes." He said.

"Oh my god, you're pathetic." Max laughed as she pulled him in the direction of the park, waving to Mike over her shoulder.

Lucas looked back and mouthed *help*, Mike just smiled and gave him a thumbs up.

Lucas flipped him off as a grin formed on his face.

"Oooh watch it, the pure one can see that!" Troy yelled as he and Will walked over with Troy reaching up to cover Will's eyes. Will laughed and pushed his hand away.

"Hahaha, the pure one." Mike laughed.

Will rolled his eyes, "I'm taking that as a compliment."

Troy slung his arm across Will's shoulder, "And that's why you're so adorable."

Will's face went red before he covered his face in his hands, "Oh my god Troy." He mumbled, his voice muffled by his hands.

Mike pretended to throw up.

Troy raised his eyebrows, "And you and El *don't* do things like this?"

Mike smirked, "Oh I know we do but *dang*, now I understand how the others feel."

Troy rolled his eyes, "How about we leave school, it got out 20 minutes ago and we're still standing by the entrance." He suggested.

"Not so fast." A voice said from behind them.

Mike looked up and gulped as he saw Troy's former friend, James, walking towards them with his new gang of goons.

Mike glanced at Troy and saw that his face had paled terribly.

"J-James?" He asked.

James let out a laugh, "Who woulda thunk that the almighty *Troy* would be hangin out with Frogface and the Fairy." His breath let off a strong stench of heavy alcohol.

Troy screwed up his face, "What do you want?"

James smirked and then his eyes wandered to Troy holding Will's hand and his face changed to where it matched the stench of his breath, "Well well well, it seems that lil Willy here has turned you into a f*king *fairy*."

Troy glared at James, "So what? I'm happy with my decision and for once I actually have real friends."

"Oh.. gee I'm *hurt* Troy. I mean.. I guess I was just your stupid side kick but now.." James stepped closer to Troy, using his height as an advantage, "I'm your enemy."

Mike stepped forward, "I'm going to give you one chance to leave before I knock your brains out." He said, jabbing his finger into James' chest.

James stared at him, his mouth gaping open a little, "What the hell do you think you're doing, Wheeler?"

Mike stood his ground but Troy pushed him to the side, "He doesn't want anything, you came to talk to me, right? Okay then, let's talk." Troy stated as he balled his fists up.

"Troy, no." Will whispered, his voice shakey.

James smirked, "You really tryin to protect this shit hole?"

Will looked at him, confusion in his face.

James huffed, "Oh don't tell me that you didn't tell your little boyfriend about the stunt that you pulled when he was missin."

"James.." Troy muttered.

Mike felt a chill run down his back as he realised what James was talking about. He knew Troy never told Will but he suspected that he would eventually.

Mike glared at James but then felt his breath hitch in his throat as he noticed the knife he was twirling in his hand.

Mike grabbed Will and Troy, "RUN!" He yelled as he dragged them away from the bullies. Mike pushed them back with his mind as the trio ran towards the woods.

"YOU'RE DEAD!" James screamed as he ran after them.

"GO GO GO!" Mike yelled as they ran into the woods, panic in their throats.

Mike could hear James right behind them and cursed. He yelled out as he tripped and fell down a hill, followed by Troy and Will.

Mike's world spun as he tumbled down the hill, finally coming to a stop as his back met a tree trunk. He let out a cough as he stumbled to his feet. He saw Will off to the side and ran over to him. Once Will caught sight of him, his eyes widened, "Look out!" He yelled, pointing behind Mike.

Mike whipped around and was met with James's fist connected with his face. He fell to the ground as his vision clouded. Mike heard Troy and Will get pushed down next to him.

James chuckled as he kneeled in front of them, "That's gonna cost you." He spat, sweat dripping down his face.

James held his knife out and signaled for his friends to get them up. They smirked and roughly pulled the boys to their feet, hanging on to one of their arms.

"Walk." James directed.

Mike was shoved forward along with Will and Troy as they began walking through the forest. Mike could feel the panic rising in his

throat. He cautiously lifted his hand slightly but Will pushed it down, as if reading his mind. Mike gave him a confused look but Will just shook his head. Mike bit his lip as he faced forward.

I'll only use them if I need to, okay?

Mike told Will telepathically. Will just nodded since he wasn't able to send anything back.

"Pick up the pace." James spat.

oOo

Mike's legs ached by the time they reached their destination. The pain seemed to disappear as he noticed where they were. He cast a glance at Troy and saw that he felt the same. Troy looked at him and mouthed an apology. Mike nodded, a cold chill running down his back as he stared at the Quarry.

"I see that you remember what happened last time." James said, his words slurring.

"What are you doing?" Will asked, his voice shaking slightly.

James smirked and then waved his hand. His goons quickly grabbed Troy and Will and pulled them to either side of Mike.

Mike held up his hands on instinct, "Mike no!" Will pleaded.

Mike shook his head and opened his mouth to object but was cut off by James, "Shut up!" He snapped, pointing his knife at Will.

Will's eyes widened as he stared at the blade that was inches from his face.

"James, stop!" Troy yelled, "Why are you doing this??" He asked, struggling against one of the bigger bullies.

James held out his hands and showed off the Quarry, "I think you have an idea as to where this is going. You see Troy, it took me so long to realise that we weren't really friends. You only hung around me because I made you look tougher. More intimidating. I was your

stupid *sidekick*; always cast into the shadows and hiding behind your stupid name! Well you see, I want revenge for every shitty thing you did to me- and this is the perfect way to." James explained, his eyes wide as he let out a scratchy laugh.

Troy shook his head, "No. No, James, you want to hurt me, fine. But leave them out of this, please." Troy pleaded.

"Pleading now are we? Oh.. how sad. Yeah.. no, I don't think I'm going to leave them out of this because even though I was just a pon to you, I was still the only one you could talk to. I know that you can handle the pain done upon yourself.. but the *second* someone else gets hurt because of you... oooh, that's when you hurt." James spat, his hands shaking.

Troy shook his head, "But this time you-"

James held up his finger, "*This time* she won't be there for him."

Mike's eyes widened as his stomach dropped. Will stared at him, confusion and concern etched across his face as he took in his friends expression.

"What does he mean??" Will asked.

James whipped around to face Will and smiled.

"Oh this'll be good... You see Will, Troy here-" He motioned forward and Troy was roughly shoved to his knees beside James, "Did a *very* bad thing when you went missing in 83." He started.

Troy hung his head as James continued, "See what happened was.. this stupid girl made Troy wet himself in front of the whole school and Lil Troy wanted revenge. So he followed Frogface and Toothless through the woods and then chased them to the Quarry. And do you know what he did?" James asked, staring at Will.

Will shook his head, his face hot.

"Troy grabbed toothless and held a knife up to his throat-" James grabbed Troy's hair and pulled his head back as he brought the knife to his throat, "And threatened to cut out all of his baby teeth if Mike

didn't jump off the f*cking cliff." James smiled as he let go of Troy's head. Troy shuddered as his face grew hot.

Will stared at Troy in shock, many different emotions flooding through him.

"And you know what Mike did??" James asked ecstatically, "He jumped! Without hesitation, just stepped right off the f*cking edge! He'd probably be dead if that girl hadn't shown up and used her witchy powers on him."

Will turned to Mike, hot tears in his eyes and his mouth gaping open in shock. Mike took one look at Will and immediately glared at James.

James stared back and pointed his knife at him, "Jump." He spat.

"No!" Troy yelled, stumbling to his feet and reaching for James. He yelled out as he was yanked back by James' friend.

Mike felt his heart skip a beat, "*What?*" He asked, his head spinning.

James sighed, "*Jump..* or the fairy gets it." He said, grabbing Will's arm and yanking him in front of him as he held up the knife.

Mike saw red as he saw fear jump into Will's eyes.

James pressed the knife to Will's neck, "Clock's ticking." He said.

Mike's mouth went dry as his eyes went from Will's scared expression to Troy struggling against his holder.

"Now!" James yelled, making Will jump.

Mike held up his hands, "Okay.. okay." He slowly turned and took a step towards the ledge, his hands shaking.

"Mike, no!" Will cried as he gripped James' arm.

James grew impatient, "You know, last time you actually seemed ready to jump off. You let your stupid fairy friend let everyone believe he was dead and there's no doubt that the shit storm that just

happened had something to do with you. You seem to mess up a lot, Wheeler, so why don't you do everyone a favor and jump." James yelled.

Mike clenched his fists as he took another step, his face hot.

James continued, "I don't even know *why* your sad excuse for some friends act like you're they're *leader*. You're so weak and for some reason wherever you go, something always follows. You're like a bad luck charm that just brings shit upon everyone you touch! You're a shitty excuse for a *leader*." James yelled, his voice growing with each word.

Mike felt hot tears spark in his eyes as he listened to James and came to the edge of the cliff, causing small rocks to tumble off the side. He felt the tears escape his eyes as what James said brought back the memories of what happened over the past couple of years. All the sorrow and constant screaming.. so many times that he's failed...

Mike flinched as he heard Troy yell for him to stop.

"MIKE DON'T LISTEN TO HIM!" Will screamed.

Mike let out a breath of air as he closed his eyes, *I'll stop my self before I hit the water*, He told Will.

"THREE. TWO. ONE!" James screamed.

Mike felt tears roll down his face as he lifted his foot over the edge.

"NO!" Troy screamed, shoving off the bully and sprinting forward. He pushed Mike off to the side before he stepped over the edge. Troy gasped as his foot slipped and he fell down the side of the cliff, his arms outstretched as he frantically tried to grab onto something.

Mike got the air knocked out of him as he hit the ground. His eyes widened as he saw Troy fall out of view. Will's scream blended with his own as he lunged forward, his arm outstretched.

Mike slid on his stomach as he leaned over the edge and stopped Troy from falling. Mike let out a breath he wasn't aware he was holding as Troy looked up at him. Mike's hand shook as he began to

fly Troy up the side of the cliff. Troy quickly grabbed Mike's arm as soon as he could. Mike grabbed onto Troy and pulled him back to solid ground, his heart racing.

Troy let out a sputtered cough as he kneeled on the ground. Mike's vision blurred as he turned back to James, who was staring at them in complete shock.

Mike held his hand out as he stood up, "Go." He muttered as he pushed James and the others back with his mind. James screamed as he flew backwards and hit the ground. He cried out as he stumbled to his feet and ran away, followed by his friends.

Will ran forward as Mike fell to his knees, blood appearing from under his nose. Will grabbed onto Mike's arms, "Are you okay??" He asked frantically.

Mike screwed up his face, "Yeah.. I just haven't used my powers in a while.."

Will roughly pulled him into a tight hug, his shoulders shaking. Mike wrapped his arms around his friend.

"I'm so sorry, I never knew and I-" Will started, his voice shaking.

"No no no.. Will it's fine.. it's.. fine." Mike stopped him, pulling away and glancing at Troy.

Will followed his gaze and felt his heart swell and break. Troy was kneeling behind Mike, the side of his face was scratched up from the cliff and his sleeve was torn.

Troy looked directly at Will, hot tears rolling down his face, "Will I.."

Will held up his hand. Troy felt his breath hitch in his throat. Out of all the things that just happened, he was most terrified about how it impacted Will.

Will quietly stood up, helping Mike as well.

Troy hastily got to his feet, his heart racing.

Will took a step towards Troy and took a deep breath as tears sparked in his eyes, "Troy.. I can't say that I'm not mad at you for what you did but.. that happened years ago and... if Mike can forgive you.. then so can I." Will said softly, "I just.. I know how you feel. I know what it's like to be blinded by your pain and to do things that you don't mean. I know what it's like to be scared of who you're becoming and I know that it makes you feel insanely guilty... We've both done terrible things unintentionally and.. we can both move on from those mistakes... together.." Will said, his voice cracking.

Troy let out a breath of relief as he stumbled forward and hugged Will. Will smiled as he buried his face into Troy's shoulder.

"I am so sorry.. I promise that I'll do better.. I mean that..." Troy cried, his voice muffled.

Will was just able to nod. He pulled away slightly so he could kiss him. Troy cupped the side of Will's face and hugged him tighter. Will broke away and stared at Troy, "Oh." He gasped.

Troy stared at him, "What?" He asked.

Will gave a small smile, and leaned in close to his ear, "I love you." He whispered.

Will laughed a little as Troy gasped, "I love you, Byers." He stated.

Will laughed and hugged him again before pulling away.

Troy grinned and then went red faced as he noticed that Mike was just kind of standing there, admiring the pebbles like they were the most interesting things ever.

Troy rubbed his neck, "Uh..Mike?" He asked.

Mike looked up and sighed, "Did I ruin the moment? Dang it."

Will laughed.

Troy shook his head, "No.. no. I just.. want to say thank you for.. what you did back there." He said.

Mike scoffed, "I think I *had* to do that since you just saved *my* life."

Troy smiled and held out his hand.

Mike rolled his eyes, "We're past that, buddy." He walked over and hugged him. Troy stood there for a second before hugging him back.

Will came over and hugged both of them, a wide smile on his face.

"Come on, let's go." He said as he pulled his boyfriend and bestfriend away from the Quarry.

oOOo

I DID IT!! WoWzzAa, there's some good ol' angst for you lovely people. I know I said no more sas chapters but news flash to past me: ya gonna write more angsty crap :) I hope you guys enjoyed!!!

7. Chapter 7

Hello you lovely people! So I've been thinking about this chapter a lot because now it's going to have some plot, woohoo! Anyway, so if you remember from *We need her* the group found files from the lab and one of them contained a file for 008, which I thought was cool bc 008 is in Season 2! Anyway, I'm doing something with her and she's not going to be season 2's 008 but I hope you enjoy!!

*Also just a random thing but have you guys seen the mileven edit that uses Forest Fire by Brighton bc I've watched it so much that whenever I listen to the song I always expect the voiceovers and then I'm like oooh right. Annywayy

oOo

November 6, 1987

Hopper groggily walked into the station after receiving a call from Flo about an important issue. He glanced at the clock as he walked to his office and groaned. It read 3:26am. He let out a yawn as he sat down in his chair and took off his hat.

"Chief." Flo called.

Jim let out another groan as he got up and walked over to her, "What was so important that I had to come at three in the morning?" He asked gruffly.

Flo sighed, "A kid was caught robbing the market down the street. She looks homeless and scared so we need you to go and try to talk to her.. Surprisingly it seems that you have a way with kids." She explained before returning to her papers.

Jim huffed as he turned and headed down the hall way to the interegation room. "Why is it always *kids*." He muttered.

He signaled for one of the officers to unlock the door and walked in. Jim stopped in his tracks as he caught sight of the girl. She had short

brown hair that was matted to her face and neck. Dried blood covered her hairline and dirt painted her clothes. She sat with her arms wrapped around herself tightly with her head held low.

Jim cleared his throat as he sat down across from her. She stared blankly at the table as if he wasn't there.

Jim folded his hands in front of him and stared at her, "Hello." He said quietly.

She gave no response.

Jim tapped the table, "Hello? Look, I'm here to help you and I can't really do that if you don't talk kiddo." He said.

The girl looked up at him slowly, her bright, green eyes shimmering.

Jim smiled, "You don't have to be scared, you're not in trouble and nothing is going to happen to you, okay? I'm here to help."

The girl gave a slight nod and sat up straight and mimicked his position.

"There we go.. now, let's start off with introductions; I'm Chief Jim Hopper and my job is to help people. What's your name?" He said calmly, holding out his hand.

The girl hesitantly reached forward and shook his hand, "Natasha." She said quietly.

Hopper nodded, "Hello, Natasha, it's nice to meet you. Now.. can you tell me how old you are and where you're from?"

"I'm.. 17 and I'm from... Hawkins." She responded slowly.

"Do you have family here?" Jim asked.

"I'm looking for them." She answered.

Jim chewed the inside of his cheek, "What do you mean?"

"I... I was taken away when I was born." She said.

"Do you know why?" He asked.

Natasha nodded, "Is it okay if I tell?"

Jim nodded.

"I'm... different... papa said that I was too dangerous.. that I needed to be kept safe.." Natasha bit her lip as she held her hands tighter.

Jim felt his heart drop as something dawned on him, "Natasha... is Martin Brenner your father?" He asked slowly.

She looked up at him and nodded, "He's a bad man."

Jim nodded, "He's gone now, you don't have to be scared of him because he's not going to do anything ever again."

Natasha stared at him, "Do you know what he did?"

"Yeah... what did he do to you?" Jim asked.

She stayed silent for a moment before pushing up her sleeve and revealing the 008 tattooed onto her arm, "He gave me powers.. just like the others."

Jim reached over and placed his hand on hers, "It's okay. I know people who can help you.. are any of the others with you?"

Natasha shook her head, "I've only known of two who have successfully escaped. The others were eliminated before they got a chance."

Jim's face fell, "He killed them?"

"Brenner was looking for something specific. He wanted to go beyond comprehension and he wanted to do the impossible. He kept.. *experimenting* over and over until he found what he was looking for.. she was known as Eleven.. she disappeared and it made him mad. He would take the ones who didn't meet his standards and.. kill them. He told them that they were a waste of space and that they didn't deserve to be there. They were all still so young... how could he have known what they were capable of??" Natasha said, her voice rising.

Jim bit his lip to keep from fuming. He hated Brenner with a passion but this... he couldn't believe it.. even for him.

"How did you escape?" Jim asked.

"I... blew the guards into a tree that broke their backs.. Brenner had men take the children into the woods to kill them. Sometimes they fought back.. but they were all to young to understand what was happening.." Natasha explained.

"That bastard... What.. what are your pow.. abilities?" Jim asked.

"I can control the wind and find a memory from anyone, including my self, and view it." She responded.

"Can you explain the memory thing?" Jim asked.

Natasha nodded, "Let's say that something happens and I want to see it in more detail, I can find the memory in my head and watch it play like a tape. I can find things that I didn't notice before and I can listen to things I didn't hear before. I can do it to anyone." She explained.

Jim grinned, "That's something new."

"What do you mean?" She asked.

"Well... I know more kids with abilities.. two of them are from the lab and one of them was... um.. yeah..just-I know One and Eleven." Jim said awkwardly.

Natasha's eyes widened, "Those were the escapist's! They're okay???"

"Yeah, yeah. They're all great and happy." Jim answered.

Natasha stood up, "I want to see them." She said as she started walking towards the door.

"Woah, hold on there kid." Jim said as he gently grabbed her arm, "I can't let you go see anyone yet until I know more about you." He said.

Natasha frowned and then took a deep breath, "My name is Natasha

Lenora, I'm 17, 5'7, and I love pizza. I was taken away from my mother who I have been trying to find since I escaped from Hawkins lab in 83. I found a group of people who took me in and taught me but because of me, the lab killed them after years of hunting me down. I finally have a lead on my mother and *know* that she's in Hawkins and I *need* to find her. Also, you just told me you know One and Eleven and you're not letting me see them?" Natasha quickly blurted out.

Jim stood in shock for a second, "Uh.. I mean.."

Natasha let out a sigh as she closed her eyes. Jim tensed up as he watched his memories of everything that's happened with the lab fly across his vision.

He gasped as Natasha finished. She stared at him, blood running down her nose.

"You *worked* for them." She spat.

"Jesus, kid, that was years ago and Mike already- HEY!" Jim yelled as a gust of wind pushed him across the room.

"How could you do that??" Natasha yelled.

"I *had* to do it to save Will!" Jim yelled back.

Natasha huffed, "And the others still forgave you after that?"

"Yes. We shut the lab down, okay? We won and nothing is ever going to hurt them again." Jim responded.

"I want to see them." Natasha said.

Jim pinched the bridge of his nose, "Kid, I don't know if you're ready- STOP THAT!" Jim yelled as Natasha looked through his memories again. He impatiently watched the kids fly across his eyes as she searched through his mind.

Natasha wiped the blood from her face once she finished, "I'm ready now. I've been out in the world for *five* years, Hopper. I think I can manage meeting people who would actually be able to *help* me." She

stated.

Hopper bit his lip, "Not today, you robbed a store and people could see-"

"I need to see them!" She interrupted as she blew the table in front of him and rushed out of the room.

"HEY!" Jim called as he jumped over the table and followed her. He pushed past the other officers and ran into the parking lot. Jim looked around and sighed when he couldn't see Natasha.

"You gotta be kidding me." He muttered.

Hawkins Highschool 2:45pm

"Oh my god, I thought Mr. West's lecture would *never* end!" Dustin complained as the group made their way over to the bike rack.

"Dude, you literally slept the whole period." Lucas said.

Dustin scoffed, "Yeah but that doesn't mean that I couldn't hear his scratchy voice."

"Oh come on, it wasn't that bad. I thought it was pretty interesting." El stated.

"Yeah but that's because you're a massive geek, El." Dustin responded.

El gasped and flicked his hat off.

"Such violence." Max chuckled.

Dustin muttered under his breath as he straightened his hat.

Lucas rolled his eyes and then burst out laughing as he looked behind his friends, "Look- Look at Will!"

Will was stumbling over with a large stack of books in his hands. The tower passed his head and he kept swinging his legs out Everytime he took a step. Troy was walking next to him, his hands up and his eyes full of worry everytime the books swayed.

"Oh my god- just let me help you, Will that's like 20 books- be careful!" Troy gasped as Will almost tripped over the curve.

By the time the two made it to the bike rack, everyone was laughing.

"I told you I could do it!" Will exclaimed as he made his way to his bike. His celebration was short as he tripped over one of the pedals and sent his books flying everywhere.

Mike quickly flicked his hand and caught the books mid air, sending them back to a stack on the ground, "What the heck were you doing?" He asked as he chuckled.

"I was trying to show.. um.. yeah I really don't know." Will confessed.

"Well I think you just about gave Troy a heart attack." El said.

Will rolled his eyes as Troy sputtered.

"Come on guys, my mom's making pizza rolls for our movie marathon." Max said as she picked up her skateboard.

"Oh my god YES!" Dustin cheered as he got on his bike.

The others cheered as well as the grabbed their own bikes.

Mike looked over at El, "Earth to El, you coming?" He asked as he caught sight of her staring off.

She blinked, "Someone's watching us." She said, pointing at the field.

"What?" Mike asked as he followed her gaze. He felt the hairs stand up on his neck as he noticed someone standing in the middle of the field, staring right at them.

"Hey guys, wait." Mike said as he got off his bike.

"What's up?" Dustin asked. El motioned forward and everyone looked at the field.

"What the hell?" Lucas asked.

"Should we go see if they're.. okay?" Max asked.

"I don't know.." El answered.

"I'm going to find out." Mike said as he started walking towards them.

El followed, along with the others.

Mike twitched his fingers as he walked towards them. He could see their shoulders tense up and their fists clenched as he came closer.

Mike stopped when he was a couple of feet in front of them. He stared in shock at the ragged girl, "Um.. hello." He said, not really knowing what *to* say.

The girl just stared straight back at him, her green eyes burning into him.

Mike swallowed, "Uh.. I um.. We were wondering if.. if you were lost or um if you needed something.." He said awkwardly.

The girl gave a slight nod.

Mike sighed, "Okay.. We can help but.. would it be okay for us to know your name?"

"Natasha." She said quickly.

"Natasha? Like from the avengers comics??" Dustin asked, his eyes wide. Lucas elbowed him.

Natasha smiled, "Yes. I picked it after my friends showed them to me."

El frowned, "You.. *picked* it?" She asked.

Natasha nodded and simply pulled up her sleeve, "I don't like being associated with a number." She stated.

El stared at it and then slowly stepped forward and held up her own wrist next to Natasha's. El looked up at her, "You're Eight.. is anyone else with you?"

Natasha shook her head, "Brenner.. got rid of them after you turned

ten.. Most of them were young but Nine and Ten were the same age as me and you." She explained sadly.

El stumbled back as realisation dawned on her, "I always thought he spaced us out.. but.. this is worse.. I.. how..?" She stuttered, holding her head.

Mike grabbed onto her arms, concern etched into his face, "Hey.. hey El. El?"

El looked at him, tears in her eyes, "I didn't even *know* that they were there.." She whispered.

Mike shook his head and pulled her into a hug, holding her head against his chest.

Natasha sniffed as she looked over the group, taking in their faces. She gave a small wave.

Dustin and Will waved back and Max nodded at her.

"Do.. do you know why Brenner used so many kids?" Max asked.

Natasha nodded, "He was searching for a specific power.. after One was created he became hungry for more power, he wanted to go beyond impossible. He wanted what Eleven has." She explained.

El pulled away from Mike, "He wasted precious lives and *used* people like weapons. He was blinded by power." She states dryly.

Natasha nodded.

"So.. how did you escape?" Dustin asked.

"I.. I killed the guards that were in charge of disposing me. We were all supposed to be dosed with something but.. I think that I was immune to it. All I remember was running.. I have the ability to go back and watch what happened but.. I honestly just want to forget it." Natasha answered.

"You can do what?" Will asked, his eyes full of interest.

"I can go into anyone's mind and search through their memories. I can watch them like they're tapes and use them for information. I can also use the air to my advantage." She responded.

Dustin let out a small gasp, "Can you show us?"

Natasha glanced at El, "Do you use your powers in public?" She asked her.

El shook her head, "Only for emergencies."

"Okay.. is there somewhere we can go? I'm also trying to get away from the chief since I got caught stealing food." Natasha confessed.

"We can go to castle Byers. I have snacks there." Will suggested.

Natasha nodded, "I don't know what that is, but lead the way."

"Wait." El said.

Natasha stared at her.

El walked over and looked at her, her eyes dancing over her face. El took her in, everything about her from her green eyes to her short hair. "We should get you cleaned up.. Then we could get to know you." El said.

Natasha nodded, "Good idea."

"Alright, boys you go hang out at castle Byers while we help Natasha." Max said, shooing off the boys. She was given a number of protests before finally giving in.

Natasha smiled, "Um.. you can call me Nat." She said.

Max grinned, "Hello, Nat, I'm Max."

El smiled, "Come on." She said as she pulled Nat over to her bike.

Byer's house

"What is *that*?" Nat gasped as El held a brush up to her pale skin.

El chuckled, "It's a makeup bresh, I'm putting blush on you."

Max rolled her eyes from where she lay on El's bed.

Nat laughed, "Oh my god it's soft.."

El grinned, "Okay, I think you're just about finished." El said as she finished her work with some tinted lip gloss, "Go take a look."

Nat hesitantly walked over to El's mirror and gasped as she saw herself. Her black hair was wavy and stopped just above her shoulders with curled bangs that covered her forehead. Her green eyes shone against her clean, pale skin and she could see freckles dotted across her nose. Nat stepped back to see what she was wearing. El let her borrow a pair of short overalls that she paired with a long sleeved yellow shirt and black leggings. Nat smiled as she tapped her laced up boots on the carpet. She turned to El and Max and did a spin.

El clapped, "Oh it suits you so well!!"

"I'm not one for girly things but you do look decent." Max said.

Nat laughed, "Why thank you."

El jumped off the bed and tossed Nat a tan jacket, "Time to go!" She said as she grabbed her own jacket.

Max and Nat followed her.

Castle Byers

"Welcome to the best place in Hawkins." Will said as he guided Nat towards his hideout.

Nat ducked through the entrance and gasped in awe at the small room, "This is amazing." She whispered as she stared at the posters and action figures. Her eyes widened as she picked up a piece of paper, "Did you draw this?" She asked quietly.

Will nodded, "I draw sometimes."

Nat looked at him and squinted her eyes, "Judging by this, you draw a little more than *sometimes*." She said as she handed it to him and walked out of the fort. Will followed her with a grin.

"Okay.. show us what you got." Dustin said excitedly.

"*Dustin*." Lucas whispered as he hit Dustin's arm.

Dustin gave him an offended look, "What, it's not everyday that you meet a superhuman!"

Lucas motioned to Mike and El wildly, "*Yes it is!*"

"I meant like.. another person. I just didn't think that there were more." Dustin defended.

Lucas scoffed at him.

"Okay... I think we should get to know each other a bit first." Mike suggested.

Nat nodded, "I'd like that."

The group introduced themselves and told basic things like their favorite color, hobby, and food.

Nat stayed interested the whole way through, eager to learn more about these amazing people that she saw before her.

"You guys seem so... *great*. I can't imagine you going through anything like what's happened. You seem so.. composed and.. happy." She said, a slight hint of sadness in her voice.

"It took a lot to get here.. and we can help you, too." El told her, squeezing her hand.

"Now.. what about you?" Max asked.

"Well... my name is Natasha Lanora, but I go by Nat. I was part of the lab and after I escaped I met a group of outcasts that took me in and taught me everything I know. They helped me control my powers and helped me trace down my mother. But when that.. *thing* started

attacking Hawkins, the lab men managed to find us and my friends helped me escape but I don't know what happened to them. So I lived on my own, looking for my mother, thieving.. living on the streets.. until I was caught stealing from the market yesterday. I was brought into the station where I met Hopper.. I searched through his memories after he told me about the others like me.. that's how I found all of you.. and why I came to you." Nat finished, her voice quiet.

El stepped forward and gave her a hug, "We'll help you find your mother and for now.. you can stay with us.. my mom would gladly help you and.. afterall... We're sisters.." She said, holding onto Nat's hands.

Nat smiled, "Thank you." She turned as she heard a sniff and her eyes widened in concern as she saw Dustin dabbing at his eyes.

"Are you okay?" She asked.

Lucas immediately looked at his friend, "Dude, are you crying?" He asked.

"No... Something got in my eye and.. this was really sweet okay." Dustin responded.

Lucas laughed, "You really *are* an emotional muffin."

Dustin gaped at him, "And I have every right to be!" He stated, his voice cracking.

"It's cause he's going through puberty." Max whispered to Nat, who let out a laugh. Dustin grinned and felt his cheeks go hot.

"Alright.. enough embarrassing Dustin.. do you want to show us what you can do?" Mike asked Nat. She nodded, "Step back." She said as she held her arms away from her sides a little bit.

She pushed off of the ground with a gust of wind and flew towards the sky. She released the wind and let herself fall. She stopped herself right before she hit the ground and took off. She circled around the group, messing up their hair and making Dustin's hat fly off, which she caught as she flew up again. Nat then turned and dived towards

the ground. She halted herself and moved herself upright before slowly landing, blowing the leaves around her away.

She laughed, her face flushed, "Wind.." She stated.

The group stared at her.

"That was awesome." Max said, high fiving her.

"You can fly." Dustin whispered, completely awestruck.

Nat smiled and handed him his hat, which he took with a wide grin on his face.

"How do you feel?" El asked.

"Good. Doing that never really drained me.. I have a pretty high pain tolerance and my friends really helped me." Nat answered.

El smiled, "Well.. it was pretty cool." She slung an arm across Nat's shoulders, "You're pretty cool too."

Nat smiled. Mike walked up next to her and held out his hand, "It would be stupid not to welcome you into our party." He said.

"Thanks." Nat said as she shook his hand, sealing an unspoken promise and a long lasting friendship between them.

oOo

I apologize if that was all over the place. But, I hope you enjoyed and that you like Natasha bc she's gonna be poppin up a lot. I wish you the best, till next time *insert waving emoji*

8. Chapter 8

Hello lovelies. So I am sad to day that I've hit a really bad writers block and my ideas aren't coming like they used to before so that will probably lead to longer gaps in between updating and I'm sorry in advance for that. But don't worry, I do have future plans for this story that should only take a couple of chapters to get to and I'm not giving up on this story. Anyway, these next few chapters after this are going to have some time gaps bc nothing really exciting happens but I will write more sappy happy dappy moments and of course some angst because it's necessary. Anway, sorry for the long AN but I just wanna keep you guys in the loop and I hope you keep reading and writing and please enjoy!oOOo

November 30, 1987

Joyce was overly welcome to Natasha when El introduced her and she convinced Hopper to let her off the hook. He agreed after about a minute because that guy has an insane soft spot for kids. He and Natasha soon developed a strong relationship. Natasha also grew close to Joyce in the first few weeks of staying with the Byers. El and her became very close in a very small amount of time. They were able to connect easily and relate to eachother. They would talk and laugh and help the other. Nat also became good friends with the rest of the party, they soon learned that she had a big sense of humour and a crap ton of confidence. She often joined Dustin in his constant prank's and the two could discuss comics for *hours*. They also discovered that she learned things quickly and was in fact, very smart. She read through El's old textbooks like they were novels and with the help of her mind, was able to understand everything she read. Joyce also helped in homeschooling her if she struggled and Nat acted in the typical teenage way when she had to go to "school".

Natasha had only known these people for a couple of weeks but she already felt like she found her place and that she was going to be able to live a normal life for once. Hopper even promised that once they found her mother, they would get her a birth certificate and enroll her in highschool for her remaing years. She believed that was

going to happen quite soon since Hopper was constantly working on finding her mom.

"What do you think will happen when we find her? Will she know me.. what if she doesn't want me?" Natasha asked El on afternoon.

El looked up from painting her sister's nails, "Well.. I think that she'll love you.. but you still have to be prepared because we don't know what happened after she had you." El responded.

Natasha nodded and then let out a groan, "I just want to *meet* her so *bad*. I mean, she's my *mother* and I've never actually had a parent before.. I guess... Hey El?"

"Hmm?" El hummed as she blew on Nat's fingers.

"Have you ever met your mother?" Nat asked quietly.

El bit her lip, "I.. haven't ever really thought about it before.. I don't really know.. Joyce is my mom, now and.. I love her but.. there are days where I think about who my biological mom is." El answered.

Nat chewed the inside of her cheek, "Yeah.. some days are worse than others but.. I'm doing better now that I've met all of you." She confessed.

El smiled and leaned over to hug her, "I'm so glad that we met you. Not just because you're my sister but because it was getting lonely with Max and I as the only girls." She said.

Nat let out a soft laugh, "Yeah.." She sighed, flopping down on El's bed.

El jumped slightly as the door shot open. Will walked in and closed it behind him, looking flustered. He came over and plopped face first on the edge of El's bed.

Nat sat up and stared at him and then at El.

El looked back at her and shrugged before looking at Will, "Hey, you okay?" She asked, tapping his head.

He muttered something into the mattress, his voice muffled.

"I'm sorry, *what?*" Nat asked, her eyebrow arched.

Will lifted his head, "I asked Troy to come to come to Jonathan and Scott's 'welcome home' party." He said before letting his head fall again.

"You *did*?! Oh that's so exciting!!" El squealed.

Will huffed and sat up, "Yeah, except for the fact that mom doesn't know that I have a *boyfriend*." He deadpanned.

Nat rolled her eyes, "Oh she'll be totally fine with it, I mean have you met her? She's like.. the most accepting person ever. She's basically the ultimate mom."

Will laughed slightly, "I don't know, I'm just *worried*. What if she looks at me differently or doesn't like him or-"

"Will." El cut him off, placing a hand on his shoulder, "Mom won't look at you any differently. You're her literal *baby* and she would be *thrilled* to know that you found someone who makes you happy, I mean, that's all she's ever wanted for you." She explained.

Will felt his face go warm before burying it in his hands, "You're right.. I should just tell her." He muttered.

"Well.. get to it, buddy." Nat ushered Will up after they were silent for a minute.

Will chuckled, "Alright, alright, but you're coming with me." He said to the two as he made his way to the living room. El linked arms with Nat as they skipped out of the room, whispering to each other as they followed Will.

Will awkwardly approached his mother, wringing his hands as he cleared his throat.

Joyce looked up from the newspaper that was draped across her lap and gave him a warm smile, "Hey honey- are you okay?" She asked as she noticed Will's flushed expression.

"Yeah." Will squeaked, his voice higher than he wanted it to be.

Joyce frowned and motioned for him to come sit next to her, "I'm not buying it. What's up?" She asked, placing an arm across his shoulders.

Will swallowed and stared at his hands, "Okay.. I figured something out a while ago.. and I've.. been in this thing for.. about 7 months and I was so scared to tell you.. and I guess I don't really know why.. it's just stupid that I-" Will stuttered, his face growing hotter.

Joyce stopped him, "Will.. whatever is going on with you, it's okay to tell me. You know that, right?"

Will nodded quickly and turned to face her, "Okay.. mom.. I'm bi.. and.. I have a boyfriend." He said slowly.

Joyce stared at him for a second and Will felt his heart skip a beat. She then gave him a smile and pulled him into a hug, "Oh honey, that's great. I can't wait to meet the lucky guy." She said.

Will stared at her, "You're not.. mad? You don't think it's weird??" He asked.

Joyce shook her head and chuckled, "Dear God, no honey, I'm not *mad*. I've already noticed that you've been acting differently and that you've been *happy*. Whoever you're with is clearly making you happy and that's all I care about. And look, you shouldn't have to feel like you have to tell me that you're bisexual, okay? I mean, Jonathan didn't come to me and say 'Hey mom, I'm straight', so you don't have to come to me and say that you're bi. It's who you are and that's all I need." She explained as she kissed the top of his head.

Will stared at her in awe for a moment before letting out a relieved laugh and hugging her, "Thank you, mom. Nat was right, you are the ultimate mom." He said, a wide smile on his face.

Joyce laughed and looked over to where the girls were peeking out from the hallway, "I try." She said before ruffling Will's hair.

Will smiled at her before running over to Nat and El, "Oh my gosh.. I feel so much better now." He sighed.

"I told you that it would be fine." El said, nudging his shoulder.

Will rolled his eyes, "Oh you are so *not* pulling the 'I told you so' card on me." He scoffed, crossing his arms.

"I'm pretty sure that she has every right to." Nat said with a laugh.

El nodded before looking over at the front door as she heard it click. Her eyes widened as she let out a squeal, "Oh my gosh, I completely forgot that Jonathan and Scott are coming back from College for a visit!" She exclaimed.

Will's eyes widened too as it dawned on him. He turned to Nat, "You remember us telling you about Jonathan and Scott right?" He asked her as El ran towards the door.

Nat nodded, "Jonathan is you're older brother, he loves photography and is dating Scott who is a therapist.. uh.. They both go to New York University... Also you told me that there was a surprise about Scott that you couldn't tell me?" Nat repeated what they had told her.

Will nodded, "You're *really* going to like the surprise." He said.

El yanked open the door and let out a squeal as Jonathan and Scott walked in, each bringing a suitcase. El jumped onto both of them and held them in a hug that Will squeezed himself into also.

"I missed you guys!" He said as they released their hug.

"We missed you too. I never really thought about how homesick I would get and- are you taller?" Jonathan said before stopping and placing a hand over Will's head. Will nodded and proudly stated that he grew three inches.

Jonathan shook his head, "I can't believe that you're having growth spurts without letting me know." He gasped in mock offense.

Scott stared at Will as well and ruffled his hair, "You better not pass me up, bud." She said.

Will shrugged.

"Same goes for you." Scott turned to El and squinted at her.

El smiled, "Nah.. I'm short." She stated.

Scott laughed.

"Hey, I didn't hear you come in!" Joyce exclaimed as she walked over and hugged the two young adults.

"We're pretty stealthy." Jonathan responded.

Joyce rolled her eyes, "And apparently bad at telling your mother that you're coming three hours early. I was about to go to the grocery store so you're stuck on babysitting duty." Joyce said as she patted his shoulder.

Jonathan gasped, "I've been here all of five minutes and I'm already down graded to babysitter." He said, placing his hands on his hips.

Joyce rolled her eyes, "Have fun and try to clean up for the party later." She said as she waved goodbye.

El crossed her arms, "Okay, first off, you should be honored to watch us, we're a joy." She pointed out.

Scott and Jonathan stared at her.

"What has highschool done to you? I remember you being this quiet, sweet girl, not this snarky teenager." Scott recalled.

Jonathan chuckled and looked over at Nat who was standing by the entry of the living room, her hands in her pockets.

"Oh, hi." He said, waving at her.

Nat gave a small wave back.

"Oh, this is Nat." El said as she motioned her over.

"Nice to meet you." Scott said as she extended her hand. Nat shook it but stopped dead when she noticed the tattoo on Scott's wrist.

Scott noticed her staring and pulled her hand away, muttering about

how she forgot to cover it up.

"No, no.. it's okay." Nat stuttered, glancing at El for some help.

"Addy, it's alright.. she understands." El assured her.

Scott looked back at Nat and then realisation hit her, "Can I see?" She asked, holding out her hand.

Nat removed the watch that covered her tattoo and showed it to Scott. Her eyes widened as she stared at it. Nat peered closer at Scott's number and let out a small gasp.

"You're Eight." Scott stated.

Nat nodded, "And you're.. One." She said, her voice soft.

They stood in silence before El intervened, "She came to us a month ago and we've been trying to find her mother. Um.. can you do the mind.. explainy thing?" El asked awkwardly.

Scott stared at her, her expression softening, "Mind explainy thing?" She asked.

"You know what I meant." El said.

Jonathan placed a hand on Scott's shoulder, "Even I know what she meant." He said.

Scott glared at him with a grin etching her way onto her face. She then looked back to Nat, "Don't freak out, I've done this to almost everyone." She stated as she placed her fingers on Nat's temples.

Nat tensed up as Scott showed her what had happened to all of them before they met Nat.

Scott gently released her and watched Nat's face contort through many emotions.

"I.. I looked through Hopper's memories but his were nothing like yours.." She said quietly.

"Mine aren't even the worst." Scott said softly, "But.. What about you?" She asked.

Nat took in a breath, "Can we sit down, somewhere?" She asked.

Scott nodded and the group gathered around the dining table.

Nat folded her hands and slowly explained her story once again, her mind racing as she did so.

Once she finished the group stayed silent before Scott reached over and placed a hand over Nat's, "Thank you.. I know it's hard doing that and.. I never actually knew what Brenner did but.. nothing like that is ever going to happen again." She said.

Nat nodded slightly and let out a breath, "I know.. but I'd prefer not to dwell on what he did.." She whispered.

El agreed and then chuckled.

Will and Nat stared at her. "Sorry, it's not funny but.. Just us explaining this so easily.. it makes me realise that our lives are nuts.." She said.

The others nodded, "Yeah.. but it's the good kind now.. no more monsters or phschotic people. Just.. us.. trying to be normal." Will said.

"Nah, normal is boring. We're not normal and that's fine." Jonathan stated.

"Agreed." Scott said.

"Now.. don't we have to be getting ready for something?" El asked, her eyes brightening.

oOo

Later

By six o'clock the group had cleaned the house, gotten ready and set up snacks and decorations. Jonathan had set up his radio and tapes

while Joyce and Scott set up the food. The kids were left with decorating and went a little overboard with the balloons.

"Guys, if you wanted a bouncy house, we could've just gotten one instead of having you guys cover the house in balloons!" Jonathan yelped as he slipped on a deflated balloon.

Will laughed and let go of the balloon he was inflating, causing it to fly across the room, "Sorry- ahahahaha!" Will sputtered he held his stomach.

"I think it looks great." Nat said as she tossed a balloon towards Jonathan.

He caught it and rolled his eyes and couldn't help but laugh as Scott entered the room and stopped dead.

Her mouth gaped open, "I didn't even realise we bought this many balloons." She said as she stared at the floor.. well what was left of it at least.

El shrugged and walked over to the couch, kicking up balloons as she went. She plopped down with a sigh and used her powers to tape the balloons on the trim of the ceiling.

"There, now we can see the floor." She said, motioning towards the ceiling.

Nat flopped down next to her, "Couldn't you have used your powers to inflate the balloons.. I'm so light headed right now.. I think I need some cake." She said, eyeing the kitchen.

Jonathan placed himself in the doorway, "No no no. The cake is for later." He stated.

Nat frowned, "Oh come on.. it would only be like.. a slice." She said.

Jonathan shook his head, "People always say that and the next thing they know, all the food is just gone." He said before leaving the room.

Nat huffed, "Well, I tried."

"Dustin would be proud." El said as she patted her shoulder.

Will jumped as someone knocked on the door, "They're here!" He called as he ran towards the door.

He opened it and was greeted with the party, all talking at once.

He welcomed them in and the room was immediately filled with light and laughter.

"Good to see you!" Mike said as Jonathan and Scott came in.

"Oh my god, you guys are taller too!" Scott gasped as she hugged the teens.

"It's a gift." Lucas said.

Jonathan's eyes widened, "Say something else." He said.

Lucas raised his eye brows, "Something else."

Jonathan scoffed, "And your voices, geez you guys are growing up too fast." He said, rubbing his forehead.

"You sound like an old man." Dustin commented.

Jonathan gave him a fake hurt look before walking over to Nancy and Steve.

"He does, doesn't he? I've been trying to tell him but he's still sticking with the grandpa commentary." Scott said before joining him.

Max rolled her eyes, "Let's never become those type of people." She said with a laugh.

"Agreed, I'm going to be a cool adult." Lucas said.

Max chuckled, "Aw, you're already doing so well." She said as she walked towards the kitchen.

"Why thank you- hey, you making fun of me, weren't you?!" Lucas exclaimed as he followed her.

"Dorks." El chuckled.

"Those are the best kind of people." Mike said.

El smiled, "Indeed." She said in a fake accent.

Mike laughed, "The heck was that?" He asked.

El shrugged, "Nat's rubbing off on me." She said.

Mike rolled his eyes, "Oh *dear*."

El nudged his shoulder, "This is a warning to be prepared, Wheeler. I'm joining the prank war." She stated.

Mike's eyes widened, "*Noo*, you're merciless!" He gasped in mock horror.

El laughed but then jumped as Will came up behind her, "El, have you seen Troy?" He asked.

El looked around and then shook her head, "I saw him come in with Steve.. maybe he's in the bathroom?" She suggested.

Will nodded, "Yeah.. I'm just nervous.. again.. Gosh I need to chill sometimes." He said as he crossed his arms.

Mike patted his shoulder, "It's going to be fine, buddy. Oh, I see Troy-oh.." Mike cut off as he chuckled, "Yeah, it'll be *fine*." He said, pointing towards the kitchen.

Will looked over and felt his eyes widened as he saw Troy talking to his mom. He let out a little gasp as he quickly walked over to them, leaving El and Mike chuckling behind him.

"H-Hey guys." Will stuttered as he walked up to them.

Troy's face brightened before giving Will a hug, "Hey, sorry I didn't say hi earlier, I was looking for you and then I bumped into your mom." Troy explained, lifting a little weight off of Will's shoulders.

Will nodded, "Oh, that's fine. H-How's it going?" He asked.

Joyce smiled, "Very well, you found yourself a very nice little guy, here." She said, fully aware of how red Will's face was getting.

"Mooom." Will muttered as even the tips of his ears went red.

"Okay.. okay I'll leave you alone before your head explodes." Joyce laughed before leaving to find Hopper.

Will looked after her and sighed as he watched her face light up when she found Hopper.

"Wait, your mom is with the *cheif*?" Troy gasped beside him.

Will chuckled, "Yeah.. they've actually been together for a couple of years.. it's nice, he makes her really happy, which is good because she's always so cautious when it comes to relationships." He answered.

Troy held onto Will's hand, "Is that why you were so jumpy?" He asked.

Will shrugged, "That and I just naturally overthink things and it's always way bigger in my head than it actually is.."

Troy nodded, "I get that.. but now you know that it's okay, right?" He asked softly.

Will looked up at him and smiled, "Yeah.. everything's okay."

"Hey lovebirds, it's cake time." Nat said as she knocked on the wall.

Will sputtered as she scared him which caused her to laugh.

Troy draped an arm across Will's shoulders as he chuckled, "Come on." He said as he guided him towards the living room where the rest of the party was gathered.

Joyce quickly grabbed the cake and brought it over to the coffee table in front of Jonathan and Scott. The cake was decorated with colorful icing that spelled out *Welcome Home*. They eagerly cut into the cake and passed out slices as everyone talked and laughed. They jokingly embarrassed the teens and made fun of the adults,

everyone's laughter blending together.

By the time the cake was finished, everyone had gone back into their own conversations, a light feeling in the room.

A shout made everyone jump and look over towards the teens.

El had just taken her plate of cake and smushed it into Mike's face. Mike sat in shock as the plate fell from his face and into his lap, leaving the cake plastered to his face. He slowly turned towards El, a grin on his face. She was laughing but let out a scream as he picked up a handful of cake. She laughed louder as she made a run for it, Mike following her, "El Byers!" He yelled as he chased her out of the door.

"CAKE WAR!" Dustin cheered as he picked up a handful of cake and threw it at Nat. She gasped and scooped up her own cake, throwing it back at him. Lucas yelled as he picked up his own handfuls and chucked them at Max. She yelled back at him as she covered him in icing. The others soon joined in and cake was sent flying across the living room.

Mike and El ran back in and were immediately met with a flying piece of cake. El squeaked and pushed Mike in front of her. The cake hit him smack in the middle of the face, causing him to stumble to the floor in surprise. He laughed and joined the fight. Everyone could be heard yelling and laughing. They smashed cake into each other's hair and smeared it over their clothes, their laughter growing with every person they hit. When the cake started running out, Hopper and Joyce teemed up and picked the platter up. Hopper held it as Joyce rapid fired the cake at the kids. The couple ended the fight with each of them throwing a handful at Jonathan and Scott, marking their win with a shout of victory. Jonathan and Scott both fell back wards onto the couch, laughing loudly.

Hopper picked up Joyce and spun her around as they cheered.

"I can't- believe- *they-* one.." Dustin gasped in between breaths, his face flushed.

"Ooh, how does it feel to loose?" Nat said, flicking cake at him.

He gaped at her, "Hey, you lost too." He stated matter of factly.

Nat shrugged, "Yeah.. but I'm not the so called unbeatable prankmaster, now am I?"

Dustin's mouth fell open wider, his eyes wide.

oOo

The night ended with everyone smiling and covered in cake. Joyce and Hopper ordered everyone to clean up while they sat on the couch like a King and Queen. They had won and they were going to use it to their advantage.

oOo

Wooah that was wayyy longer than I meant it to be but the cake war popped into my head last minute and I thought it would be funny. I hope you guys enjoyed and I hope to hear from you guys!!

*Also this is nothing important but I thought it was funny so I'm gonna tell you. So, earlier in the story when Will was talking to the girls he said "Yeah, except for the fact that mom doesn't know that I have a boyfriend." The auto fill in word thingy on the keyboard suggested that it say: "Yeah, except for the fact that mom doesn't know that I have a gay." And myself at 2am thought that it was really funny so there ya go :)

9. Chapter 9

HELLOOOOOOO! Gosh diddly darn it's been like a month and that is absolute crap but heyyyy I'm back with a chapter that was originally 2 chapters but I somehow managed to combine them, idk. Anyway, I have missed writing for this story and I want to frickin muder my writers block... Hope you enjoy, lovelies

oOo

February 16, 1988

It had been two years since a certain group of people defeated the biggest threat that they had ever encountered. The first year everyone almost missed it, they barely noticed how it had already been a year since then. It all felt so distant and strange. This time around it was different. The group had realised how much had changed since then and how absolutely incredible it was that they were able to get their lives back. They decided to go out for lunch and celebrate just being alive because two years ago, they all didn't know if there would be a tomorrow.

The group of teens was crowded into a corner booth of a diner, laughing and drinking milkshakes. It all seemed so... perfect.. it seemed right. It showed them that no matter what happens to them, they were going to get through it and the best part of that was that they were going to do it together. They were going to do everything, together.

oOo

"Okay, okay. So you've got three chairs and four friends, what do you do?" Dustin asked as he slurped his milkshake.

"Have someone sit on another's lap."

"Have everyone stand."

"Play musical chairs."

"Someone's gotta sit on the floor."

"Kill the fourth friend."

"Nat, no!" Dustin sputtered.

Nat laughed, "Kidding.. kill the third friend." She stated.

Dustin face palmed as the table erupted into laughter.

"Muder is not the answer, my friend." Max explained, patting Nat's shoulder.

Nat shrugged, "It depends."

"Oh my god, I'm gonna take your comics away, you are literally becoming Natasha Romanoff." Dustin said, waving his hand in the air.

Nat gasped and hit his hat, "Stop threatening to take my stuff!"

Dustin glared at her, "Make me."

"Alright, stop flirting, you're making me sick." Lucas said with a fake groan.

Dustin's face turned beat red as Nat smirked at him.

Max chuckled, "Are you sure it's not the two burgers you just ate?" She asked, motioning to his plate.

Lucas let out an actual groan as he layed his head on her shoulder.

Max rolled her eyes and patted his cheek, "There, there you big baby."

"Dear god, there is *another* child in the group?" Troy asked as he stared at Lucas who was clutching his knees to his chest at this point.

Lucas looked at him and let out a little defiant, "Hey."

"Who's the other child, might I ask?" Mike asked from where he sat with his arm slung across El's shoulders.

Troy grinned and pointed at Will, "Why, the one coloring the kids menu," Troy looked down at Will's drawing and gasped, "Holy shit Picasso, you have two crayons how the hell did you do that?"

Will shrugged and smiled down at his paper, "Pure talent." He stated, handing Troy the paper.

Troy's eyes widened as he stared at it and then at Will, "You cease to amaze me, Willie." He said, slinging his arm over Will's shoulders.

Will gave a little hum of satisfaction before drinking his milkshake.

Mike leaned down next to El's ear and whispered, "We're not as sappy as them are we?" He asked.

El looked up at him, "No, we're sappier." She stated, a smile tugging at her lips.

Mike laughed, "Good." He said.

El stared at him as his smile seemed to fall off his face when he looked out the window. She frowned, noticing that he had been off today, "You okay?" She asked, sitting up to look him in the face.

Mike snapped out of his haze and nodded, "Yeah.. you're okay, right?" He asked.

"Of course.. as long as you are." She responded.

Mike smiled at her, "I'm fine." He stated as he kissed the top of her head.

El sighed and stroked his cheek with her thumb, "Mike.. friends don't lie." She said softly, her brows creased in concern.

Mike grabbed her hand and held it in both of his, "I'm *fine*, El, just tired." He assured her, rubbing his eye for effect.

El sighed, "M'kay." She mumbled as she took a sip of her shake.

Mike smiled and leaned back in the seat, his eyelids growing heavy.

oOo

Mike stifled a yawn as he slowly opened his eyes. He frowned as he realised that he was alone in the dark diner. He huffed, suspecting that it was just a prank.

He slid out of the booth and let out a gasp as he slipped on something and fell to the floor. Mike looked around in confusion and felt his heart skip a beat as he noticed the large vines covering the floor.

"No, no, no.." He muttered as he grabbed onto the table to pull himself up.

That's when he heard it.

A scream. A *familiar* scream.

"El?!" Mike yelled as he pushed away from the table and sprinted towards the door.

Mike ran into the parking lot and stopped dead when he saw it.

The shadow monster that had taunted and scarred him was holding a knife to El's knee, once again.

Mike felt his heart speed up as he noticed the rest of his friends laying on the ground in front of him, their eyes glazed over.

Mike let out a choked sob as he fell to his knees and stared helplessly at the one thing that scared him most.. the thing that *terrified* him.. the one that haunted his dreams and the one that made Mike watch as it killed everyone he loved.

"P-please.. I.. I can't loose them again.." Mike begged.

The shadow gave a smirk before quickly sliding the knife across El's throat. She let out a choked noise before falling to the ground, limp.

"NO!!" Mike screamed as he threw the monster back, causing it to disappear.

Mike fell forward and cried into the pavement, his cries coming out

in screams.

oOOo

Mike jolted awake, grabbing onto the table as he took in a breath of air, his eyes scanning the room.

"Mike?" El asked, holding onto his arm as he tried to slow his breathing.

"Are you okay?" Will asked, coming over to kneel next to him.

Mike quickly looked over all of the concerned faces looking at him. He shook his head and rubbed his eyes, "Yeah.. yeah, sorry, guys.." He muttered.

Will placed a hand on his shoulder, "Mike.." He started, his voice thick with worry.

"I said I was *fine*." Mike snapped, knocking Will's hand off.

Will stared back at him with hurt in his eyes, "Okay, I was just trying to help." He muttered before grabbing his coat and leaving the diner.

Troy gave the table an apologetic look before running after him.

Mike instantly felt guilt rise up inside of him, "Shit, Will!" He called as he ran after him.

Mike skidded into the parking lot and made his way over to Will, "Will, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to snap-"

"It's fine. You clearly don't want to talk about it so I'll just give you time to cool off." Will cut him off as he headed toward Troy's car.

"No- I didn't mean it like that, I'm sorry-"

"Just stop, Mike. *Something* obviously happened to you in there and I was just concerned because you honestly looked terrified. But excuse me for thinking that even after all this time that you would just *tell* me what's wrong instead of trying to spare me the hurt. Well news flash, Mike, I've been through shit just like you and I can handle

whatever you're dealing with, you just have to *tell me*, okay?" Will stated, his voice full of hurt.

Mike stared at him, his face growing hot.

Will stared back, breathing heavily before turning around, "Whatever, figure it out on your own." He muttered before getting in the car.

Troy stood by the drivers door, his mouth agape, "Uh.. see you later.. maybe." He stuttered before getting in as well.

Mike watched as they drove away, his heart pounding.

Mike jumped as he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned to see Lucas coming up next to him, along with Dustin and the others.

"I'm sorry guys.. I can't talk right now.. sorry.." Mike mumbled as he walked away from them, heading towards his car with his head held low.

oOOo

Will stared at the ceiling, his face still hot from his argument with Mike. Troy ran his fingers mindlessly through Will's hair as they lay on his bed, talking quietly.

"Should I apologise?" Will asked quietly, looking up at Troy.

Troy looked at him, "Um.. I've never been good with apologies but what I do know is that if you feel like you need to then you should.. even if it's only a small part of you.. I think." He responded.

Will nodded in thought, "Yeah.. I wasn't to hard on him was I?"

Troy sat up, "No. He needed to hear that but I think you guys need to talk... he just needs someone to talk too and I honestly think it's easier for him to talk to you than El. Especially since it was you two who were arguing." He answered, draping his arm across Will as he rested his head on Troy's shoulder.

"I guess you're right.. You really think it's easier for him to talk to me?" Will asked mindlessly.

Troy nodded, "Yeah, you guys are practically brothers at this point and I have kinda noticed that El babies him just a *little*." Troy said, chuckling slightly.

Will scoffed, "They *do* baby eachother, so much in fact that it's almost funny."

"What's funny?" El asked as she walked into the room.

Will groaned, "*Knock*." He said, grinning.

El rolled her eyes and backed into the door way. She knocked on the door loudly, "I'm coming in." She stated as she walked over and sat on the edge of Will's bed.

"How may I help you?" Will asked, folding his hands in his lap.

El chuckled, "Hopper is coming to take me and Nat to the station to help find her mother and I was just coming to get something. Also, I need you to check on Mike, okay? Just.. talk to him and make sure he's okay.." She explained, her voice soft.

Will nodded, "I will... do you think it has to do with today being the anniversary of.. the.. thing..?" He asked, unsure of how to word it.

"I think so but everytime he starts getting nightmares from it he blocks me from seeing them.. whatever happened scarred him and I don't think he wants anyone else to see it." She answered.

Will sighed and rubbed his head, "God, now I feel like a jerk."

El patted his leg before standing up, "Tell him that I hope he understands that he can talk to us.. I have to go but.. whatever he says, don't leave him alone." She said before leaving the room.

Will frowned, "We need to go, now." He stated as he got up.

Troy nodded and grabbed his keys as they headed for his car.

oOo

"Do you want me to wait here or head home?" Troy asked as they

pulled up in the Wheeler driveway.

Will nodded, "I might be a while so why don't you head out. I'll call you later." He said as he kissed Troy's cheek before quickly getting out of the car and making his way to the front door.

Will knocked and when he didn't get a response just ended up walking in. He headed towards Mike's room and stopped outside of his door. He rapped his knuckles on the door softly, "Mike?"

Will heard a small cry and that was all he needed before opening the door and walking into the room.

Will found Mike on the ground, leaning against his bed with his knees pulled to his chest. The light streaming in from the blinds gave way to the tear streaks on Mike's face.

Will silently went over and sat next to Mike. He felt his friend relax next to him as he sniffed.

"Look, Mike.. I understand that.. what happened that night.. it hurt you.. bad. But, I also need you to know that you can talk to me about it. You don't have to keep it locked up inside of you.. that only makes it worse.. just.. tell me." Will said softly, placing his hand on Mike's knee.

Mike looked at him, his eyes glossy with tears, "Will... I *want* to tell you.. I don't want to be the only one to feel this- and I know that's selfish- but.. I just *can't*. Everytime I get the courage to talk about it.. I just see it happen all over again and I *can't*-" Mike broke off with a sob, tightening his grip on his legs.

Will felt his throat grow tight, "Hey.." He said softly as he layed his hand on top of Mike's, "I get that it hurts.. and that you don't want to relive it but sometimes it's easier to share the pain with someone. It doesn't help to act like you're okay or that you don't feel it sometimes.. something like that doesn't go away and it won't get better unless you talk about it.." Will explained, subconsciously holding his hand over his stomach.

Mike noticed the slight twitch of his hand, "Will?" He asked.

Will looked at him, "Hm?"

Mike swallowed, "Do you.. do you remember being shot and.. what happened after?"

Will was silent for a moment before he took in a shaky breath and answered, "Yeah.. sometimes I get this ache.. I don't know if it's from being in the Upside Down or from.. that. But, yeah.. I feel it sometimes.. sometimes it hurts and othertimes it's just an odd feeling that I can't shake, I guess." Will answered, tightening his grip on his shirt as he spoke.

Mike nodded, "I get that too." He whispered, holding his hand over his chest.

Will breathed out, "We're scarred, Mike. Mentally more than physically but it's there, we're just too scared to bring it up."

"Yeah.. Ugh, I hate this *so* much." Mike groaned, running his hand through his hair in frustration.

"Well.. at least you're not alone." Will said.

Mike nodded and then faced Will, "Look, I know that you want to help me but I can't show you or anyone what happened because I was the only one who was meant to see it and I plan to keep it that way." He explained.

Will frowned but nodded his head slightly, "Okay.." He breathed out shakily.

Mike placed a hand on Will's shoulder, "Thanks.. and I'll try to stop hiding things like this."

The corners of Will's mouth twitched slightly, "Thank you, Mike."

oOOo

El and Nat leaned over the paper that Hopper just handed them.

El looked at him, "You did it?" She asked quietly.

Hopper nodded, "We found her."

Nat stared at the paper in shock, bringing her hand up over her mouth.

El squeezed her free hand, "What do you know about her?"

"Well, her name is Olivia Lenora and she lives in the middle of town in a trailer park. We don't know what condition she's in but.. we can go meet her if you want." Hopper explained.

El looked at Nat, "What do you think?"

Nat stared at the paper and then at El, "I want to meet her.. now."

oOOo

"We don't know what we'll see so.. just prepare yourself, okay?" El said to Nat, who was fidgeting as they pulled up to the trailer.

Nat nodded and then grabbed El's hand, "Stay next to me?"

"Of course." El assured her as they got out of the car.

Hopper knocked on the door and El felt Nat tense up next to her, tightening her grip on El's hand.

A young woman opened the door a moment later, dressed in scrubs. She looked at them with a confused look, "Hi... how may I help you?" She asked.

Hopper straightened his hat, "Well, we are looking for an Olivia Lenora?"

The woman nodded, "She lives here. I'm her nurse, Kate." She said, extending her hand.

Hopper shook it, "So, we came because there's someone here who wants to meet her... we have a right to Believe that Ms. Lenora is her mother." He explained.

Kate bit her lip and then looked at Nat, her gaze softening, "You.. you

have the same eyes." She said.

Nat let out a relieved laugh, "Can.. can I meet her?" She asked.

Kate nodded, moving over to allow them to walk in.

The trailer appeared smaller on the outside. The inside was filled with flowers and bright colors. A woman sat on a white couch in the living room.

"Here she is, she has trouble with communication, so speak clearly." Kate explained as she closed the door.

El squeezed Nat's hand before letting go and nudging her forward.

Nat looked at her before hesitantly stepping forward. She kneeled in front of her and looked over her.

"Umm... h-hi, I'm.. Natasha." Nat stuttered as she looked up.

Olivia slowly looked at her, her mouth parted slightly. Her face stayed blank as she stared down at Nat.

Nat swallowed the lump in her throat, her eyes watering, "Uh... I think.. I think I'm your daughter.. and I.. I wanted to meet you, so.." She trailed off, staring at her hands.

"..Ta..sha?" Olivia asked softly.

Nat snapped her head up, "Yes! Yes, that's my name." She said, a tear rolling down her face.

Olivia stared at her for a moment before her eyes brightened. She leaned forward and cupped the side of Nat's face, wiping away a tear with her thumb.

Nat reached up and held on to her hand, "Do.. do you remember me?" She asked quietly.

Olivia smiled, "Of course.. Rose."

Nat's breath hitched as her mother spoke.

"That's my name?" She asked.

Olivia nodded, "Only.. only if you want it to be." She said.

Nat let out a laugh as she leaned forward and hugged her mother.

Olivia wrapped her arms around Nat, a smile on her face. She looked over Nat's shoulder at Hopper and El, "Thank you." She whispered.

Hopper nodded and El smiled, her eyes teary.

oOo

"17 years old... I missed 17 years?" Olivia asked, staring at Nat.

Nat nodded and held her mother's hands, "But I'm here now.. and I can show you.. what you missed... the good parts at least."

Olivia shook her head, "No, just tell me.. I don't want to think about what they did to you... either of you." She said, looking over at El, who was sitting next to Nat.

They nodded, "Neither do I." Nat said.

Just then, Hopper walked back in with Kate, having taken her outside to explain somethings to her; leaving out everything the lab did.

"Okay.. well, there will need to be paperwork for you to get custody over Nat before she can stay with you so for now.. we'll have visits until everything is settled, and we should get going now." Hopper explained.

Olivia nodded, "Of course.. I'll see you tomorrow?" She asked.

Nat nodded eagerly, "Absolutely."

oOo

It was around 10pm when Hopper dropped the girls off at the Byers' home. They walked in feeling exhausted and relieved.

The two plopped down on the couch with a sigh.

"Wow." Nat breathed as she leaned her head back.

"I know.." El agreed as she slouched into the pillows.

"She's *really* nice." Nat commented.

"Yeah.. I'm happy for you, Nat." El said to her.

Nat smiled, "I think I'm going to use Rose as my middle name.. Natasha is who I am but I still want my birth name, you know?"

"Of course. I think it's nice." El responded, her eyes growing heavy.

Nat gave a small hum of satisfaction as she closed her own eyes.

The two jumped as the phone rang. El quickly got up and answered it.

"Hello?" She asked a little groggily.

"El? It's Will, I need you to come over to Mike's." Will said urgently.

"What, why?" El asked, wide awake now.

"I-I don't know, he fell asleep while we were watching a movie and now he won't wake up and I th-think he's having a nightmare- I can't tell, just get over here!" Will answered, his voice cracking.

"Okay, I'm on my way, just stay calm and try to wake him." El hung up the phone and quickly grabbed her car keys.

"What is it?" Nat asked, already on her feet.

"Something's wrong with Mike." El said as she ran out the door with Nat at her heels.

oOOo

El sprinted into the Wheeler house, her heart racing as she bounded down the basement steps. She found Will crouched beside Mike, who was laying on the couch. His face was ghost white and was painted with sweat. He was fidgeting slightly, his hands in tight, shaking fists.

El kneeled next to Will, "How long has he been like this?" She asked as she looked over him.

Will shook his head, "I-I don't know.. about an hour?"

El sighed, "Okay, go get a cold rag from the kitchen while I try to wake him up." She instructed.

Will nodded and raced up the stairs.

El reached over and pressed her fingers on either side of Mike's head, closing her eyes.

She flinched away as heat shot through her hands.

"What the hell?" She muttered.

"What happened?" Nat asked from where she stood behind El, her arms folded.

"I.. don't know." El responded as she tried again.

The same thing happened again but with more intensity. El let out a yell as she pulled her hands away, "God dammit, Mike, let me in!" She yelled in frustration.

"He's still blocking you out?" Will asked as he returned with the rag.

"I don't know if he means too but I can't get through to him." El answered, her face hot as she moved over to allow Will to place the rag on Mike's forehead.

"I'm getting Nancy." El stated as she ran up the stairs.

Will looked after her before returning to Mike, smoothing down the cloth on his head, "Come on, buddy.." He whispered.

"Can.. can I try?" Nat asked as she kneeled next to Will.

"I guess.. but be careful." He said.

Nat nodded before placing her fingers on his temples. She hissed in pain as the heat shot through her hands but kept them firmly planted.

She closed her eyes and tried to find his memories.. something to wake him up.

Nat gasped as she watched what he was seeing play through his head. It was of that night, where he lost everyone. She tried not to look but they came at her too harshly.

Nat pressed harder as she grabbed onto a memory of the group playing Dungeons and Dragons. She felt Mike relax under her touch before jolting awake with a scream.

Nat fell back, tears in her eyes as she looked at Mike.

Mike frantically looked around, grabbing at his chest as he took in quick, raspy breaths.

Will held onto his ahoulders, "Hey, hey it's okay. You're okay, Mike." He soothed.

Mike ignored him and locked his eyes onto Nat, his face forming a scowl.

"What did you see?" He asked, his voice low.

Nat stared at him in shock, a tear rolling down her face, "I.. I didn't mean-" She started, her voice shaking.

"I didn't want *anyone* to see that! Didn't you think that there was a *reason* I hid it from them?? You had no *right* to get in my head and watch that!" Mike yelled as he stood up, towering over Nat.

Just then, El and Nancy rushed down the stars, stopping abruptly at the sight of the scene before them.

"I'm sorry, I-" Nat started.

Mike waved her off as he pushed past El and Nancy and ran upstairs.

El looked over at Nat, who was still on the floor in shock, "What happened?" She asked.

Nat avoided her eyes, "I didn't mean to see it, I was just trying to

wake him up." She muttered, hiding her face.

El went over and kneeled next to her, "What did you see?"

Nat looked at her, tears streaming down her face, "The one thing he never wanted anyone to see." She stated.

El's face fell. She stood up and made her way to the stairs, turning to face Will and Nancy, "Stay with her." She said before leaving.

Nancy called after her but El ignored her as she went towards Mike's room.

She could hear his stifled sobs as she came closer to his door. El took a deep breath before entering, her throat tight.

She closed the door behind her, allowing her eyes to adjust to the darkness. El slowly made her way over to where Mike was sitting on his bed, his face buried in his arms as he hugged his knees to him.

El sat down next to him, placing her hand on his.

"Mike?" She asked softly.

He flinched at the sound of her voice, the small movement pulling at El's heart.

"Hey.. talk to me." She said, leaning closer to him.

Mike sniffed and held onto himself tighter.

El frowned, "Look, I want to help you, Mike.. we all do. And I know it's hard but you have to tell us when something is wrong.. and you need to stop blocking me out.. please."

Mike was silent for a moment before he let out a muffled apology.

El sighed, "You don't have to be sorry, Mike. You just need to know that we're here for you."

Mike lifted his head and looked at El, his eyes glossy with tears, "I *do* know that you're there.. and I *do* want to tell you but.. it's hard.. it's

so hard to even think about what happened and it hurts, okay? I know you want to help but by not talking about it and you guys not knowing.. it does help.. Knowing that none of you have seen what happened.. that helps me.." Mike explained, his voice quiet.

El nodded, her eyes pricking with tears, "Okay.. As long as you tell us when you're having an off day.. It's okay." She whispered, her voice barely audible.

Mike smiled slightly and pressed his forehead against hers, "Same goes for you, El.. I know you act like a badass but you have bad days, too." He said.

El chuckled and held onto his hand tighter, "I will... I promise."

Mike let out a sigh of relief, looking at El. He closed the small gap between them and kissed her lightly.

El smiled at him before sliding out of the bed, "Come on.." She said, pulling him with her.

Mike wiped his eyes with the back of his hand and followed her to the basement where they found Nancy, Will, and Nat sitting on the couch.

Nancy stood up as the two entered. She was on the other side of the room in a second, enveloping Mike in a hug.

"How are you doing?" She asked, her voice muffled by his shirt.

Mike smiled, "Better." He answered.

Nancy pulled away and looked him over, "Okay.. I'll go make some hot chocolate while you guys talk." She said before she left the teens alone.

Mike watched her go before looking at Nat, who was fidgeting on the couch.

He shoved his hands in his pockets and walked over to her, "Hey, Na-" Nat cut him off as she jumped up and hugged him, "Mike, I am so sorry, I never would've done that if I knew what I would see and I

know how much it m-"

"Nat." Mike interrupted as he pulled away, his hands on her arms.

She stopped, her breath hitching.

Mike took a deep breath, "Look, I understand why you did it and.. it's okay. You helped me wake up and I'm sorry that you had to see that.." He explained to her.

Nat nodded, "It's okay... God, Mike, you're insane."

Mike arched his eyebrow, "How so?"

She scoffed and crossed her arms, "Oh nothing, just the fact that you experienced something like that but fought through it like a badass."

"Are you buttering me up, Nat?" He asked.

"No, no no.." Nat stated, waving him off.

The room was silent for a moment before Mike let out a small chuckle.

The others looked at him, confused.

"What?" Will asked, a grin forming on his face.

Mike shrugged, "It's that same feeling again- where even after everything that's happened we still manage to get through it like this.. where we're still all light hearted and shit at the end." He explained.

El laughed, "I guess that makes us all badasses then."

"I really thought you guys would've figured that out sooner." Nancy said as she returned with a tray of steaming mugs.

"I'm too modest to notice something like that." Will said as he accepted the drink.

"I can tell." Nancy commented.

The group laughed, ending the night by sipping their drinks and talking, realising once again that there would be bad days but as long as they weren't alone, they would get through it.

oOOo

I'm sorry if this fell apart towards the end, I didn't know what to dooooo ugh. Any suggestions for what you'd like to see next??

10. chapter 10

HELLO!!! Hoooooly crap my writers block has just completely abolished me and I apologize for the wait! I've tried working on my other story but my writer's block stopped that too and then I watched Inifinity War, which absolutely crushed me and I was too caught up in that to focus on this buT NOW I'M BACK AND WITH THAT LOVELY ANGST! I take back what I said about writing non angsty chapters bc lets be real, literally everything I write has angst in it. Everything. You guys should see my english reports, just saying. Anway, please enjoy and feel free to comment as they make me incredibly happy and fuel me to write more!

oOo

May 30, 1988

Graduation

Mike ripped off his tie for what seemed like the seventh time after another fruitless attempt at tying it. He slammed it on his dresser and looked at himself in the mirror.

"Do I really need a tie?" He asked his reflection, playing with his collar as he did so.

"Uh, yes. Yes you do." Nancy said as she appeared in the doorway.

Mike jumped, "God, you know I hate when you do that, right?" He asked, motioning towards her.

Nancy grinned, "That's *why* I do it. Anyway, mom will flip if you don't wear a tie." She said as she walked into his room.

Mike sighed, "But it's annoying and you won't even be able to see it!" He protested when Nancy reached for the tie.

Nancy rolled her eyes, "Too bad, you big baby, you're wearing a tie." She stated as she placed it around his collar.

Mike let out a groan as his sister tied it for him.

Nancy straightened the blue tie around his neck and placed her hands on his shoulders, "There, now you look somewhat presentable."

Mike rolled his eyes, "Oh, goody." He muttered.

"Hey." Nancy said, causing him to look at her.

"You'll only have to wear it for a couple of hours and then you can take it off and we can party and celebrate you guys getting old." She said, brushing off his shoulders.

Mike scoffed, "*I'm* getting old? You're 22!"

Nancy placed a hand over her chest and made a mock hurt face and then laughed, "Okay, I'll give you that but you're *graduating!* And let's not forget you're the fucking valedictorian- somehow- and that you have to give a nice, big, adulty speech about how *wonderful* the school is and all that."

Mike groaned again, "I don't even know how I got that, I missed so much school when.." He trailed off and placed his attention on his tie.

Nancy put her hand under his chin and lifted it up so he was looking at her. She gave him a soft smile, "Look, you'll be fine. You're a *great* kid- which is somewhat annoying- and you'll impress all the collages and parents with your stupid speech and.. well, I'm proud of you, so think about that." She told him, her voice quiet.

Mike smiled and before she had barely finished he had his arms around her, "Thanks, Nancy." He said, his voice muffled by her shoulder.

Nancy nodded and gave him a squeeze before releasing him. She looked him over and then sighed, "Thank god for these heels or I would have to deal with the embarrassing pictures of my younger brother being taller than me at his graduation." She said before giving him one last smile and then turning to leave.

Mike chuckled as he watched her disappear past the door frame. He turned to look at himself one last time, pulling at his tie a little before

placing a picture in his jacket.

Chills shot through Mike as he watched something flash in his mirror. He whipped around and sighed as he watched his curtains shift as wind blew through his open window. Mike walked over and closed it as he tried to shake the feeling of unease coursing through him.

"Nerves." He scoffed as he made his way out of his bedroom.

oOo

"Oh my god, look at you!" El practically squealed when she saw Max upon getting out of her car.

El ran over, her heels clicking on the pavement.

"No, don't look at me, look at *you*!" Max exclaimed as El gave her a little twirl in a sleeveless, white, lace dress that stopped above her knees.

"I've already done it- spin." El directed, looking at Max, who rolled her eyes before spinning in her short red dress that flowed around her like a rose, her normally messy hair tucked up in a bun on the top of her head.

"Holy shit, Lucas is going to freak." El laughed as Max tripped slightly in her heels.

"Not as much as me if I have to wear these heels any longer." Max muttered as she bent down to straighten one of her shoes.

"You two sure you're not trying out for a beauty pageant?" Nat said as she walked over to the two.

"Oh shh." El said, but flipped her curly hair over her shoulder with a grin anyway.

"Well, you two look great while I feel like I'm going to straight up melt.." Nat said as she waved herself with her clutch.

"Nah, the only thing you'll be melting is Dustin's heart when he sees you in *that*." Max said, motioning to Nat's forest green slip that was

lined with black lace.

Nat chuckled and brushed herself off, "I doubt that.. he'll probably be too busy gawking at Jennifer Hayes.."

El shook her head, "Not a chance. Have you even *seen* the way he looks at you?" She asked, arching her brow at her sister.

Nat gave a nervous chuckle, "I-I don't think that he-"

Max waved her hand at her, "And I'm gonna stop you right there. Dustin *likes* you. Trust me, he's showed me the same heart eyes that he gives you *everytime* he looks at you."

Nat's face flushed as a smile spread across her face, "Well, if you say so- but we should really be getting into the school-" She said quickly as she began making her way towards the highschool.

Max and El followed her while laughing all the way.

oOo

"You hate it too?" Dustin asked as he caught Mike fidgeting with his tie *again*.

Mike nodded, "But my mom won't let me take it the fuck off." He muttered as he tugged on it.

"Language." Will said as he walked over with Troy.

Mike rolled his eyes, "Thanks *mom*." He retorted.

"Whose being the mom friend?" Lucas asked as he slung his arm over Dustin's shoulders upon joining the group.

"Who do ya think?" Dustin asked.

Lucas glanced over at Will and held back a laugh as Will's face flushed.

"Dude, your head's going to explode if it does that one more time." Troy said as he tapped Will's cheeks.

Will rolled his eyes and muttered something about being nervous.

"Ah, it's alright. All you have to do is walk up on the stage in front of all of those people, shake hands with the principal and then walk off without falling-" Dustin began, waving his hand as he talked.

Lucas elbowed him, "Are you *trying* to make him more nervous?" He asked, raising an eyebrow.

Dustin sputtered, "N-No... Unintentionally, maybe but at least he doesn't have to give a speech like Wheeler over here." He said, motioning to his friend.

That earned him a whap on the head from Lucas, "Stop talking!"

Mike chuckled, "It's okay, Lucas. I can handle reading a notecard for a minute." He said, giving a thumbs up to Dustin, who was rubbing his head.

"Okay, boys, let's all just take a minute to stop hitting eachother and realise that we're fucking graduaring!" Will said, raising his hands.

Dustin gasped, "Holy shit, Will you said-"

"Finally!" Lucas cheered, high fiving Will.

"Finally, as in, we're graduating or that I finally grew the balls to curse?" Will asked, a wide smile on his face.

"Jesus- Who are you and what have you done with that small, innocent cinnamon roll that is Will Byers??" Dustin asked, holding onto Will's shoulders.

Will laughed, "I think it's time that I broke out of my child safety net and lived a little."

Lucas snorted, "Living a little, as in, cussing when your mother is in the same building as you."

Will straightened his jacket, "What can I say? I'm one for living on the edge."

Troy patted him on the shoulder, his face red from laughing.

Mike pulled on the cuffs of his jacket as he laughed at his friends making fun of one another. Just being regular kids, who were about to have a regular graduation, and then a kick ass party afterwards.. *that was what living the life would be if you asked him.*

oOOo

"Hello, gorgeous." Mike said as he leaned over to kiss El on the cheek after finding the girls by the entrance of the gym.

El chuckled, "Hey, you." She said as she interlaced her fingers with his.

"You guys ready to graduate or do you want to spend the ceremony gazing into eachother's eyes?" Lucas teased as he walked over with his arm around Max.

"Oh, shut up." Mike said as he nudged Lucas' shoulder with his hand, a smile spread across his face.

Lucas held his hands up in surrender, "Well, let's get going then." He said, motioning towards the doors.

Max gave El's arm a squeeze before following Lucas into the gym.

"You ready?" Mike asked El.

She looked up at him and smiled, "Definitely." She said as she lead him into the gym, her eyes brightening as she saw the stage and the rows of chairs for the graduates.

oOOo

"Thank you all for coming on this lovely morning. It is my pleasure to introduce you to the class of 1988 graduates." Principal Mortia said as he began the applause for the students.

Once the clapping subsided, he straightened the clip board on the podium and began reading the names in alphabetical order.

El felt her heart speed up as he read through the list, nearing the B names. She relaxed slightly when Will gave her hand a squeeze.

"El Byers." Principal Mortia's voice seemed to boom over the speakers as he spoke El's name. El swallowed the nervous lump in her throat and stood up, straightening her white graduation gown.

Applause erupted and El didn't have to try hard to pick out her friends cheers.

She walked towards the stage, a smile on her lips as she accepted her diploma and shook the Principals hand. There was a bounce in her step as she walked off the other side and took her seat among the graduated students.

"Will Byers."

Will laughed slightly as he heard his friends cheer louder than the other students.

Will stood and made his way up the stairs to receive his diploma and shake the Principals hand. A wide smile spread across his face as he descended the steps and walked over to sit by El, who grabbed his hand excitedly.

The two siblings waited patiently as Principal Mortia continued down the list.

"Troy Harrington."

Will clapped loudly as he watched his boyfriend accept his diploma and hand shake swiftly. He smiled at Will before sitting down.

"Dustin Henderson."

Dustin got up quickly and walked up the stage steps, a little too eager as he tripped on the final step and fell to his knees, earning him an eruption of laughter from the other students.

Dustin laughed it off and did a small bow once he was on his feet before accepting his diploma and finger gunning the crowd before walking off.

"Classic." Will whispered as he watched his friend take his seat.

The Principal continued down the list until, "Natasha Lenora."

El almost stood up in applause as she watched her sister ascend the steps to the stage and accept her diploma.

Nat winked at El as she made her way to the seats.

A few more names and, "Max Mayfield."

Lucas' cheers could be heard above the others as his girlfriend collected her diploma and the students laughed as she gave Lucas the bird with a wide smile on her face. Lucas acted hurt but laughed as he watched her sit down with a smirk.

An "Oh dear.." Could be heard from Principal Mortia before he continued down the list.

"Lucas Sinclair."

Lucas got up and straightened his tie as he walked towards the stage, holding back a laugh as Max returned the favor of cheering loudly for him. He accepted his diploma and then jumped off of the stage, disregarding the steps. The students laughed as he walked over to sit down like he was a million bucks.

Principal Mortia pinched the bridge of his nose before resuming to call the names of the graduates.

"Mike Wheeler."

Mike stood up and laughed as his friends erupted with multiple cheers and appluase. Some of the things the group yelled earned them a few glances from the adults and a chuckle from Mr. Clark.

Mike accepted his diploma and felt the tension in his shoulders relax as he walked over to the seats and sat down.

Principal Mortia finished off the list with a sigh and lead the applause for the students.

"And now students, you may flip your tassel's and-" He was cut off as hundreds of graduation caps flew into the air with the graduates cheers.

Laughter spread throughout the gym as they attempted to recollect their caps and congratulate each other.

"Settle down, now. Settle down." Principal Mortia said as he raised his hands.

The estatic students eventually returned back to their seats, each buzzing with joy.

Mortia smiled as he looked over the crowd, "Now, we will have the valedictorian come up to say a couple of words to you heathens.. In my opinion, I have never met a student so dedicated and hardworking than this particular student. Sure, there we definitely mishaps and unexpected turns but even through all of that, this student managed to make his way back from whatever problems he faced, even better than before. So, it is my pleasure to welcome our valedictorian, Mike Wheeler." He held out his hand to signal Mike to come up to the stage.

Mike smiled as he ascended the stage for the second time, his heart racing. He shook hands with the Principal and stood behind the podium before facing the crowd.

Mike looked down at the notecard he held in his hands that he had prepared weeks before. Mike skimmed over it before leaning towards the microphone and holding up his card, "You know, I had a whole speech prepared and all that but now that I'm here-" Mike flicked the card behind him and placed his hands on the podium, "-I realise that there are things that we just don't get to be prepared for. I can't count the amount of times I go through a day where I have no idea what's going to happen. There's no way to tell, it's as simple as that." Mike paused as he looked over the students.

"Hawkins is definitely a town that is used to things going haywire. It's a place that has dealed with parallel dimensions and monster invasions- as crazy as that sounds. We're all able to say that we've been through the unexpected and what people outside of Hawkins

would call impossible. But even despite all of the crazy shit that has happened, all of us have gone through one thing that is considerably more unbearable than all of those impossible instances; school." Mike paused as the graduates laughed.

"Yeah, school was definitely an... *experience* that I personally, never want to go through again. But, now that's it done.. I think that I *might* just miss it... slightly. Anyway, I know that we're all itching to *finally* leave and go to our grad parties but let me just say how proud I am to say that I live in Hawkins. To say that I live in a place that has experienced the impossible and was able to build itself up again, even after all of that." Mike felt his mouth go dry as he looked over at the faces in the crowd. The faces that belong to people who have lost things, and gained half as much back.

"So, here's to some of the most badass people that I know; the class of 1988!" Mike exclaimed as he held his fist up in the air, followed by the eruption of applause from the graduates.

Mike clapped along with them, a feeling of completeness surging through him. He looked into the crowd and picked out the faces of his friends.

This was for you. He thought as he placed his hands back on the podium.

Mike stepped back and was about to turn to walk off the stage when chills ran up his spine. He froze in place as he looked over his shoulder at the back wall of the gym. Mike felt his hands shake as a familiar sound coursed through the gym, shutting off the applause and sending everyone into silence.

Mike stumbled backwards slightly and almost fell into the podium as a large crack formed down the middle of the wall.

Mike stared at it in shock as it grew and split open, "What?" He asked, his voice quiet.

Mike looked back at the crowd and locked eyes with El, the panic in him growing as he was met with the same confused expression as his own.

Mike whipped back around as the screams started. He felt his eyes widen as pieces of the wall fell to reveal the same slime and vines that haunted him. Mike let out a yell that was cut short as a being burst through the gate with a shriek, sending anyone who was on the stage flying backwards onto the gym floor.

Mike felt the air knocked out of him as he collided with the floor. His vision was blurry for a second before it allowed him to see the creature that was standing on the stage.

It was two times the size of the demogorgan, with longer limbs and a taller form. Its head resembled the past monster far too much and it caused Mike's breathing to hitch. The monster let out a shriek and looked across the crowd, its head snapping towards Mike the second it saw him.

Mike felt his blood run cold as it made a move to lunge towards him. He watched, frozen in shock, as it was sent flying into the wall.

Mike looked up and saw El standing behind him, her hand out and a small droplet of blood coming from her nose.

The moment the monster fell to the ground, El bent down and helped Mike up.

"Come on!" She yelled as she grabbed his hand and ran towards the exit, along with everyone else.

Mike and El were shoved along as the crowd scrambled out of the gym. As soon as they were out of the room, El pulled Mike into the nearest classroom and shut the door.

"What the *hell* is happening??" Mike asked, holding his side from when he was thrown on the ground.

El placed a hand over her chest as she looked out of the window on the door, "I-I don't know. I didn't think that they'd be able to open gates without the.. what did we call it?" El asked, rubbing her head.

"Thessalhydra?" Mike answered, "I don't really think we ever gave it a name.."

El nodded, "Well whatever it was, it was like the leader of the Upside down or something so once it was gone I thought they couldn't... I don't know." El put her head in her hands as her voice grew quiet.

Mike walked over and placed a hand on her back, "Hey.. we'll get out of this.. just like we always do." He said softly.

El shuddered, "I just don't know why they keep coming back..or how.."

Mike flinched as he heard the monster gain consciousness with a shriek.

El tensed up, "It's awake." She whispered, her face paling.

Mike gripped onto her shoulder as his other hand reached for the door handle, "People are still out there and we-"

"Are the only ones who can stop it." El finished for him.

Mike nodded before pulling off his graduation gown and cap, El doing the same. Mike ripped off his tie, "This'll be one hell of a story." He muttered before opening the door.

Mike looked around the hallway before walking out of the room with El.

"Thank god." She whispered as she noticed that most of the people got out.

Mike tightened his grip on her hand as he walked towards the gymnasium doors, his heart racing.

He stopped by the door frame and peered inside. His heart dropped when he didn't see the monster.

"Shit." He muttered.

"It has to be in the school." El said.

"Let's hope so." Mike said as he started towards the end of the hallway.

The lights flickered as they walked against the wall, their shoulders tense everytime they looked around a corner.

Mike had to supress a scream when he turned a corner and almost collided with Max and Lucas.

"Holy shit!" Lucas whisper-yelled as he caught sight of Mike.

"What are you guys still doing here?" Mike asked, his voice strained.

Lucas almost scoffed, "Did you guys seriously think that we wouldn't stay?"

El frowned, "Sadly, no." She admitted.

"Monster fighting feels like it's a hobby at this point." Max said as the group continued down the hall.

"I honestly can't tell if that's a good or bad thing." Mike responded as he led the group.

"Considering where we live, I'd take it as a good thing." Lucas said.

El opened her mouth to say something but was cut off with a scream.

"This way!" Mike yelled as he sprinted down the hallway.

Mike ran around a corner and stopped so abruptly that Lucas ran into him.

Lucas grunted but gasped when he saw what was happening in front of him.

The monster was leaning over a motionless body, it's twisted hand reaching out to touch his face.

"Hey!" A voice yelled from the other side of the monster.

Mike strained his neck to look around the monster so he could see who had yelled.

His attempt was shut down as a gust of wind sent the monster flying backwards.

Lucas screamed as he ducked out of its path before it hit the wall. Max pulled him back when the monster was pushed into the ground, creating a large hole.

"What..?" Mike began even though he already knew who had done it. He turned around and saw Nat standing with her hand out.

"Oh my god." El breathed as she ran over and hugged her.

Nat returned the action but then pulled away when she saw the figure on the ground.

Mike followed her gaze and felt his heart drop as he saw who it was.

"Dustin.." He whispered, running over and kneeling by his friend.

"Oh my god-" Lucas gasped as he came over.

Mike looked down at Dustin and shuddered as he saw the trail of blood running down his face.

"He- He's okay.. we just gotta wake him up." Mike stuttered as he shook his friends shoulders.

"Hey- Hey, buddy, come on, wake up.." Lucas pleaded as he gripped Dustin's shoulders.

Mike barely noticed when Nat came over and kneeled by his head.

"Here, let me.." She said quietly, her voice strangely calm.

Mike held onto Dustin's arm as Nat pressed her fingers against his temples. She closed her eyes and remained silent as she went through his mind.

"Come on.." Mike whispered when Nat's face scrunched up as blood appeared under her nose.

Mike was aware of El and Max standing behind him and Lucas, but kept his eyes on Dustin.

Nat let go of Dustin's head with a gasp as he woke up with a yell, his

eyes wide.

"Dustin!" Mike exclaimed, steadying his friend as he wildly looked around.

Dustin grabbed onto Lucas' and Mike's arm as he closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

"You okay?" Lucas asked quietly.

Dustin gave a slight nod before opening his eyes, "Holy shit." He breathed.

Mike sighed out in relief, "He's okay." He said as he and Lucas helped him up.

"Do you remember what happened?" Lucas asked.

Dustin touched his head and winced at the contact, "Well... I was running, I remember falling and then that *thing* was in front of me." He explained, motioning towards the hole in the ground where it had fallen.

Dustin's face contorted, "But.. how did we go to an amusement park, today?" He asked.

Mike looked at him, "Huh?"

Nat stepped forward, "You didn't. That was me, I used a memory of you guys at an amusement park to wake you up." She explained, wiping the blood from her nose.

Realisation flashed across Dustin's face, "Oh- Okay, that makes sense-T-Thank you." He stuttered, his face flushing.

Nat nodded before giving him a smile and then walking over to Max and El.

"We should probably go.." Mike said, trailing off as he glanced at the hole in the ground.

"Did you kill it?" El asked Nat.

Nat shook her head, "I think I just knocked it out.." She answered as she looked over at the hole.

As if in response, the monster let out a shriek.

"Aaaand now it's awake." Max said as she backed away from the hole.

The monster continued to scream as it climbed, its voice growing louder the closer it came to the group.

"Run!" Mike exclaimed as its hand became visible.

The group sprinted through the hallway, the thundering of the monsters steps not far behind them.

Mike turned a corner and let out a curse as he would met with a dead end, the only exit leading to outside.

"We can't let it out." El said, flinching as the monster shrieked upon seeing them.

"We don't have a choice." Mike stated as he flung the doors open and ran out, the others following him.

El turned around and slammed the doors shut on the monster with her powers. It let out a scream before breaking through the glass.

"What do we do?" Dustin asked as the monster exited the building.

"Run." El stated before turning on her heel and running. She ran around the side of the building and towards the front of the school.

"Look out!" Mike yelled, pulling her down as a car flew over them.

"Did it just throw a fucking car at us?" Max asked as she stumbles to her feet.

"Yep and now it's time to go." Lucas replied quickly as he grabbed her hand and ran forward.

Mike flinched as the monster shrieked behind him. He let out a curse as he turned and saw all of the people standing in the front of the

school. Police tape and cop cars covered the scene.

"Go ba-" Mike began but was cut off as the monster flung him backwards, sending him flying towards the entrance of the school, along with Dustin and Max.

Mike let out a yell before stopping himself and the others mid air and setting them on the ground. He stumbled slightly as he watched El, Lucas, and Nat run towards him.

"I think it's safe to say that everyone knows you have powers now." Max said as she looked over the group of people staring at them in shock.

Mike just held out his hand as he stepped towards the monster, "I am getting *really* tired of dealing with things like you." He stated as his hand started to shake.

The monster let out a shriek that shook the ground as it faltered.

El appeared at Mike's side and joined him, her head bent slightly.

The monster grabbed at its head and let out a shriek that sent anyone near it flying backwards.

Mike's shoulder spiked with pain as he landed on it and skidded on the ground.

He stumbled to his feet and turned around, "Nat, keep them back." He said, looking at his friends.

Nat nodded and pushed Max, Lucas, and Dustin back, ignoring their shouts of protest.

"Mike, look-" El said, pointing towards the monster.

Mike looked over and watched as the monster clawed at its head.

"What's it doing?" He asked.

El faltered, "It.. It doesn't want this." She said quietly.

"What?"

El looked at him, her eyes glossy, "It doesn't want to be doing this. It doesn't know what it's doing and with its leader gone- it doesn't know what to do." She explained.

Mike looked at it and realisation flashed through him, "It doesn't know what it's doing.. until its already its done it."

El nodded and flinched as it let out a cry of pain, "The leader controlled it and without it- El stopped, her throat tight.

Mike self his shoulders sag, "It's acting like me when I was being controlled by Peters." He stated, hot tears making their way into his eyes.

El nodded.

Mike stepped forward, "We have to-" He was cut off as the police opened fire on the creature.

Mike's eyes widened as it cried out in pain and flinched away.

"Stop!" Mike screamed as he ran forward and held out his hands, stopping the bullets and making the officers drop their guns.

"Don't hurt it!" Mike exclaimed.

The policemen stared at him in shock as Mike let the bullets fall to the ground.

"It's going to kill us!" One of the men yelled.

Mike shook his head as El stepped towards them, "No it won't.. it doesn't know what it's doing. It doesn't *want* this." She said, motioning towards the creature.

"How do you know?" Someone asked.

"Because I know how it feels." Mike said like it was the simplest thing in the world. He then turned and walked towards the creature, "Don't let them fire at it." He said to El, who faced the crowd and held up

her hands.

Mike stepped forward and kneeled in front of the monster, who was writhing in pain on the ground.

Mike reached forward and pressed his hand against its head, not retracting it when the monster cried out.

"I'm sorry." Mike whispered before closing his eyes and pressing down on the monster.

It lets out an earsplitting shriek that shakes the ground. Mike can hear the screams of the crowd blend with the monsters.

He feels tears escape his closed eyes as the monsters pain surges through him, only subsiding when the monster goes limp under his touch.

Mike opens his eyes with a gasp and lets out a shuddered cry as he watches the monster dry out until it is nothing but dust.

Mike watches as its blown away by the wind, chilling his bones. He slowly stands up and faces the crowd, tears falling down his face. El looks at him from where she stands in front of them and begins walking towards him as Mike falls to his knees.

His world fades to darkness before she can reach him.

oOOo

When Mike comes to, he feels a warm washcloth on his forehead and hears muffled voices surrounding him.

Mike reaches up to remove the cloth and pushes himself up onto his elbows. He slowly opens his eyes and blinks a few times before realising that he's in his basement.

"Shh- He's awake." A voice says, one that Mike recognizes as Will's.

Mike slowly sits up and looks around the room. Scattered around the basement is all of his friends. They look tired but relieved as they talk quietly.

"Hey, how are you?" El asks, placing a hand on his shoulder.

Mike nods, "I'm good.. w-what happened?"

"Well, for starters, all of Hawkins knows that you, El, and Nat have powers. There's already countless articles about it.." Will trails off as he looks at El, who finishes for him, "And secondly.. the monsters gone, I don't know how you did it but.. it's gone.."

Mike swallowed hard, "That's..good.. I mean, I don't know what we're going to do about the whole powers thing but considering what's happened, it's time that people knew.. and.. I don't even know how I got rid of the monster.. I think it kind of did it on its own.. I just showed it how." He explained.

El nodded and let out a sigh of relief, "Well, no one got hurt and Dustin's okay and now you're awake so.." "

"We can stop sulking around and take a second to realise that we're graduates??" Will asked eagerly, jumping as Troy joined him from where he sat on the ground.

"I'm all for that, afterall, this isn't the first time this has happened." Lucas said as he drew circles on Max's hand with his thumb.

"Still don't know if we should consider that a good or bad thing." Mike said as he leaned back on the couch.

Dustin shrugged, "Let's just consider it a Hawkins thing."

Mike chuckled, "Okay. The Hawkins thing. When you fight against monsters and then continue your day like you don't give a shit."

"Perfect." Nat said, giving him the okay sign.

"So... party time?" Troy asked, arching an eyebrow as he looked at the group.

"You bet your ass it is." El stated.

oOo

All of the adults had planned a party in the Wheeler's backyard. They had a food table, lights strung between the trees, scrapbooks full of the kids, and music playing.

The graduates groaned and laughed as they flipped through their photo albums, cringing at their embarrassing phases.

"Picture time!" Karen called halfway through the party, gathering the kids in front of a tree as she stepped aside to let Jonathan take the pictures.

The group smiled and then jumped on each other, causing some very funny pictures that they would keep framed in their houses for years to come.

The parents embarrassed their kids into getting pictures done with their partner, making kissing faces behind the camera as they did so.

Mike felt his face go red when Nancy and Steve mimicked a pose he and El were doing. Mike flipped her the bird and kissed El in the process.

Max jumped on Lucas' back as she pressed a piece of cake into his face, her face lighting up when he screamed out of shock. Jonathan captured the moment and Max fell to the ground laughing as Lucas wiped the cake off and smeared it on her.

Troy and Will were a little awkward with their parents watching them, but soon relaxed when Will ruffled Troy's hair and kissed him.

Dustin and Nat stood off to the side as they watched the couple's.

Dustin glanced at Nat, "So.. um, thanks for.. what you did earlier." He said, motioning towards his head, which was now sporting a blue bandaid.

"No problem." Nat responded.

Dustin twiddled his thumbs as his face flushed.

Nat looked at him and rolled her eyes. She reached forward to place her hand behind his head and then kissed him. Dustin froze for a

second before returning the action, his face hot.

Nat pulled away but kept her arms around his shoulders.

Dustin stared at her, his mouth open slightly, "Wow." He gasped, his voice three times higher than usual.

Nat chuckled, "You were taking too long." She said before giving him a smile and then walking towards the others.

Dustin looked after her, a wide smile forming on his face before realisation hit him, "Wait, Nat, you knew??" He asked as he stumbled after her.

oOo

I actually really enjoyed writing this chapter, despite the fact that I deleted half of it and re-wrote it. I love the fluffy, funny stuff but I also love some angst. Also, I planned Dustin and Nat getting together the moment I introduced her so... and I needed to give Dustin some love bc he's so sweet and funny and deserves it tbh.

And now that the kids are getting older, I've definitely expanded their.. use of language, as you can tell. It's kind of funny looking back to when I first had someone drop the f bomb because half of the word was censored out while now I'm just like haha there it is.

Welp, I hope you enjoyed and I'll see ya later

11. AN

Hey guys. I just want to start off with an apology for the lack of updates or good ideas. I'm having a really bad writers block right now and I just have zero motivation to write or even think about this story right now which, believe it or not, actually makes me really upset because this is the second part of the first fanfic that I've ever written and I used to be so excited to write about it but now I don't feel that way about it anymore. I guess I don't really know where this story is going anymore and I think I'm going to take a break from it until I get more ideas but as of right this so called "three part story" is on hold and I'm so sorry for that. I want to say thank you to those who've stuck around and are still reading, it means more than you'll know. And I honestly don't know if this break will turn into me discontinuing the story or night. Well, again, I'm sorry and I encourage you guys to keep reading and writing because it's helped me in more ways than I can count and I wish you all the best. Thank you x

12. Bye

So. Hi guys. I know that I said that I was going to try continuing this story and that I had so many ideas for it but.. I think I'm going to end it here. I love this story and I enjoyed writing it and seeing everyone's thoughts about it SO much. *We need her* was the first fic that I ever wrote and I will always love it but I think it's time to let it go. All of my ideas for it are so far forward in the story and I have no clue on how to get to them so, I'm going to end it here. Everyone's happy and they live good lives and stuff like that. Y'know, the goods. I don't have anything else to say except sorry to those who would've liked more and THANK YOU to all of you who read it, all of your comments lead me to be a better writer. Thank you again, it means more than you'll ever know. And, I'm leaving but I will be posting on Archive and Tumblr, both @irondad_spiderson_duo (Archive uses dashes instead of underscores though) if you would like to find me :) Well, see ya later guys, gals, and non-binary pals; it's been fun.